

“I ’m a Compulsive Masturbator!”

I hate it that I am overpowered by an addiction to porn and compulsive masturbation. I don't understand why I just can't stop it. I really loathe that part of myself. It disgusts me. Can you help?

You and millions of other people, millions MORE now that the internet has invaded our lives!

I serve on the board of [Living Hope Ministries](#), a Christ-centered outreach to those wanting to leave homosexuality. I asked Ricky Chelette, a pastor of First Baptist Church of Arlington (TX) and Executive Director of Living Hope, to share his highly understandable explanation of what happens in an addictive cycle, in a way that has also helped many people dealing with their various besetting sins. He graciously gave me permission to offer his material to answer your question. I hope it helps.

Sue Bohlin
Probe Ministries

Understanding The Cycle of Sin

This is the cycle of sin that I often share with folks that meet with me. Though I designed this visual image for overcomers with same gender attraction (SGA), I have used it with my single adult group as a whole, for I feel the concepts are universal though the vehicles we use to accomplish our end result might be somewhat different.

Take a look at this diagram.



Hunger or poor Health
Angry
Lonely
Tired
Stressed
Depressed

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You begin the cycle of sin at the bottom of the page where you see the letters and blank lines.

Though many of you think that what triggers you is the sight of a good looking man/woman, I think something much deeper is taking place. Most of our triggers fall into one of these broad categories:

- **Health**

I am talking about bad health. When you are sick you are open to temptation.

- **Hunger**

When we are hungry we can feel temptation.

- **Angry**

- **Lonely**

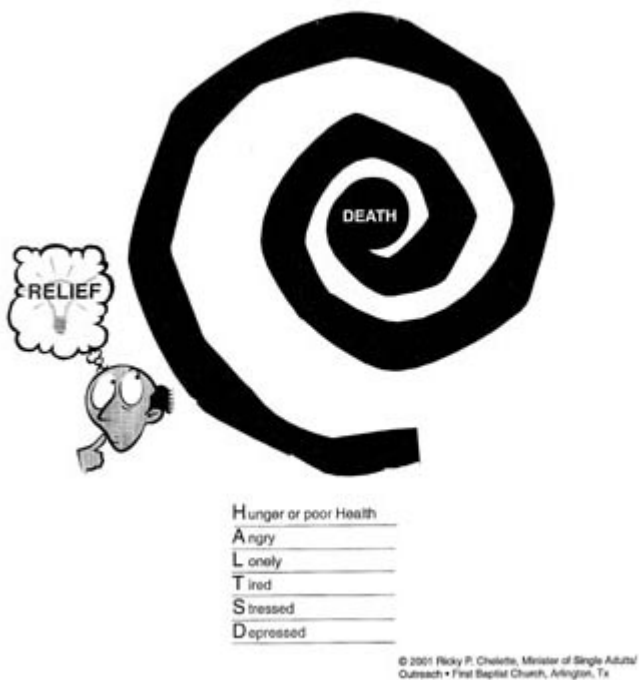
Need I say more...

- **Tired**

- **Stressed**

- **Depressed**

Whenever we feel one of these feelings or something closely related to one or more of them, we have the thought of RELIEF. We all want relief from the pain, hurt and stresses of our lives.

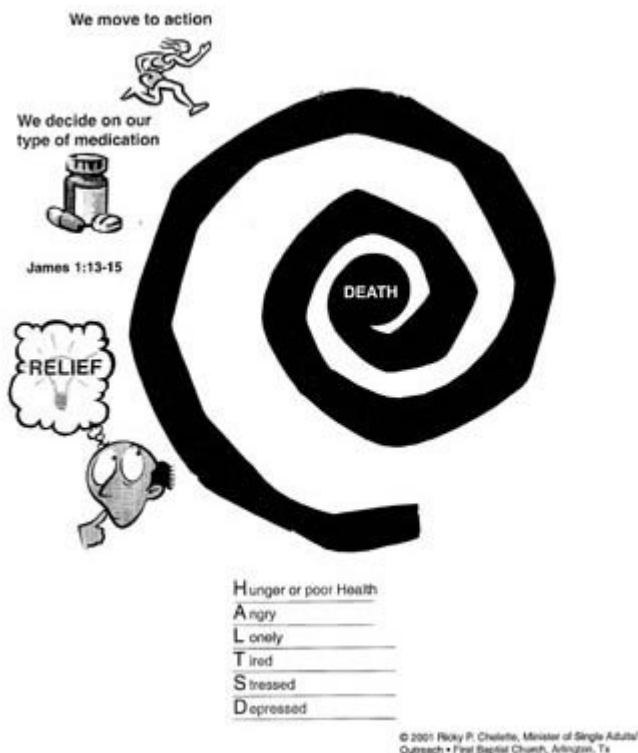


The way that we find relief is to seek some form of medication. This does not have to be actual medication, though it can be and this is how people get addicted to drugs, but it is medication all the same. It is something that causes us to experience pleasure and relief.



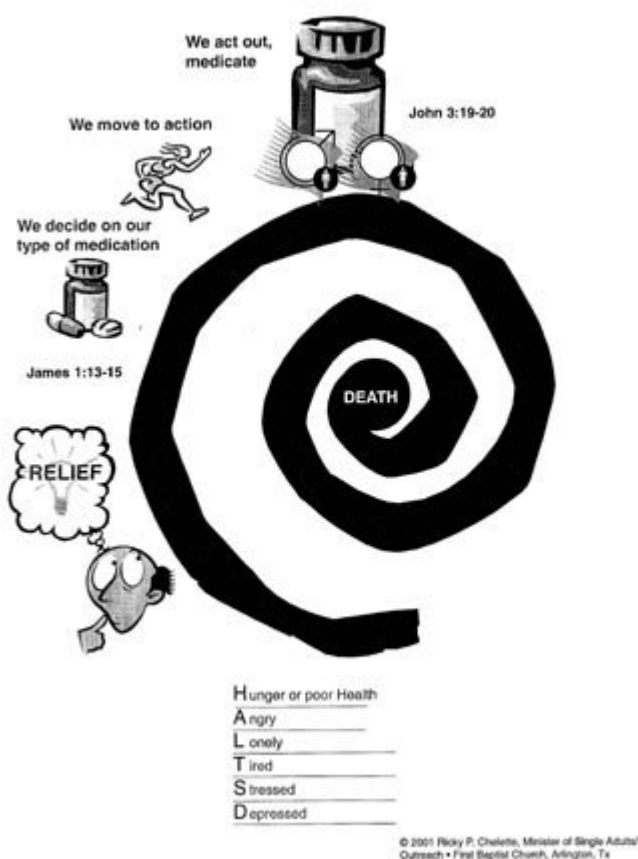
So we move from the bottom of the diagram to the thought for relief (the man and the bubble) to the thought of what we will do to medicate our pain and find relief (bottle of pills).

When we decide to medicate our pain we go through some action (the runner) before we actually get to the medication.



Oddly enough, even the action toward the intended medication, is somewhat medicinal itself. For example: If you are going to do the big M (masturbation) for your medication you might get undressed and lay in bed, or jump in a warm shower. If you are going to cruise P (internet Porn) on the internet you might get into something more comfortable and begin the search process. If you are going to act out with another or "cruise," you might get cleaned up and put on some alluring clothing or other articles that would give clues to your intent. Basically, you go through some sort of ritual of preparation. It just doesn't "happen." However, we have done this ritual so many times that it feels quite automatic—we may not even realize that we are doing it. It is at this stage that most people tell me that they feel as though they really can't help themselves—"it is like another person has taken over my body and I am just on autopilot." In many ways, they really are. I am convinced that once you move from thought to action, it is very difficult if not nearly impossible to stop the ultimate medication/action from taking place. Yes, of course God could intervene, but He has created us with free will and

He rarely interferes with our willful decisions. During this phase of the cycle you are also likely to be producing adrenalin; a very strong chemical that makes a person's heart rate increase, increases their blood pressure, and gives them a sense of invincibility.



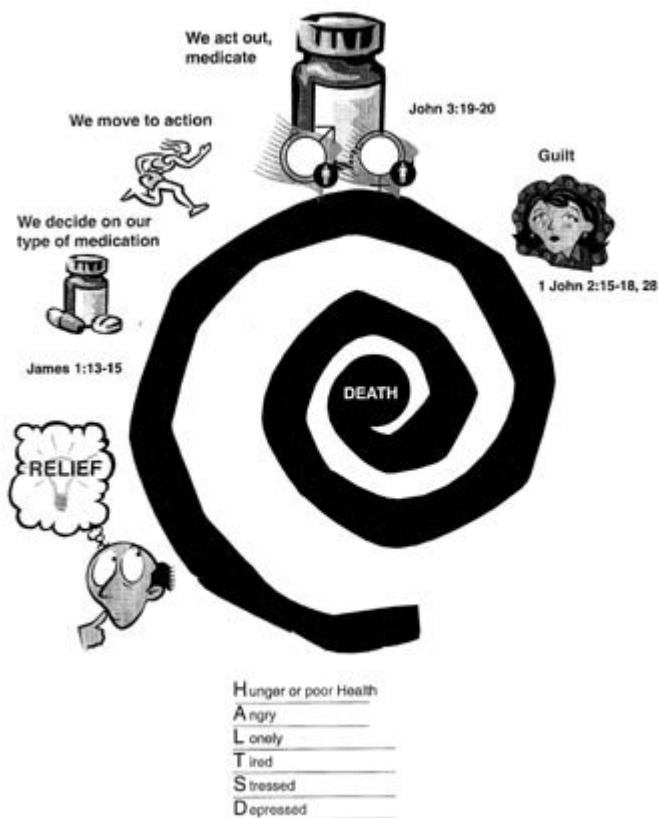
Finally, you carry out your medicative fix by doing the big M or having sex and achieving an orgasm in some way. When you do this, your brain produces a chemical called endorphin. This chemical is extremely strong, some say even ten times stronger than cocaine.

Every time you achieve an orgasm or act out in some way to achieve your medication, endorphins are produced and your body responds in a very predictable way. This is why you get that feeling of pleasure, euphoria, or peace when you orgasm (medicate). There are actually chemicals being produced in your brain that make you feel good. The preparation for the orgasm also can produce these chemicals (remember Pavlov's salivating dogs?!) but not in the same quantity or intensity

as the orgasm itself. (Now you are at the top of our diagram—medicine bottle)

I want you to think of your brain as a CD. Each time endorphins are produced, you burn another track on that CD. If you keep playing the same tune (producing the same chemical) over a period of months/years, you burn a rut in your CD and it is very, VERY difficult to get out of that rut. It is a universal, psychologically proven fact. We establish pathways in our brain that demand that we do certain things and get our fix. Thus, we continue to the cycle of medicating our hurts. .

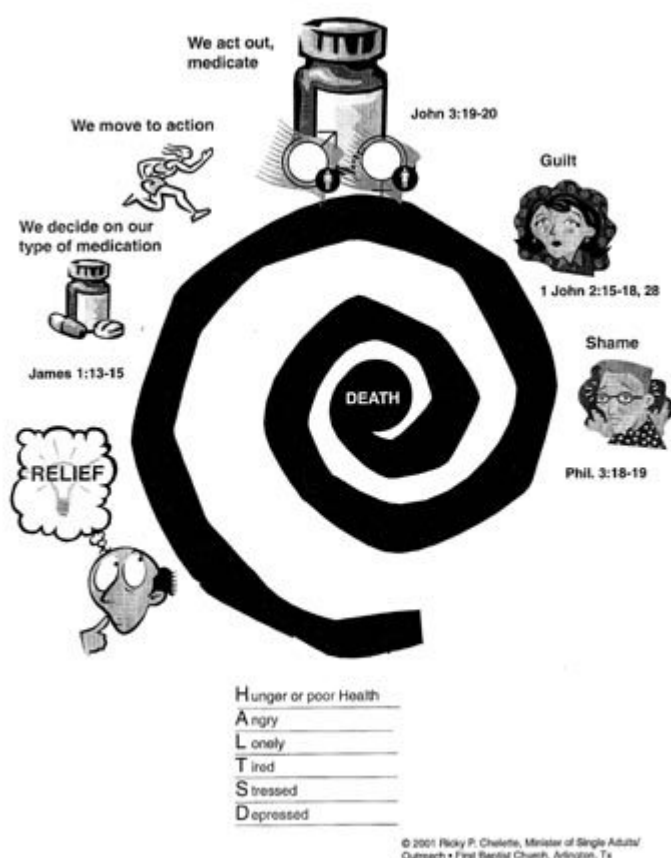
However, like every high, it is followed by an equally powerful low. The low begins as the chemicals in our brain are absorbed and assimilated into our bodies. We first begin to feel guilty (the lady that is crying on the diagram).



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I believe that guilt and conviction are really good things. I see them as a way that the Spirit of God brings correction and

discipline to our lives. However, many times we feel guilt, but we don't confess and repent. We simply feel guilty. We do this because we think that God will not hear our prayers. . . again, for the thing that we seem to keep doing over and over. As a result, not too long after we feel guilt, Satan comes in and uses our sense of guilt to make us feel shame (the man that looks perplexed).



Shame, I believe, is of the devil. The difference between guilt and shame is that guilt is over our actions—things we do. Shame is feeling bad about who we are—our sense of self. Shame causes us to review the lies of Satan and our old tapes that tell us that, “I am worthless. God doesn't really love me. I am a loser. No one will ever love me. I will never be rid of this sin. I am gay. Etc., etc.”



These self-loathing statements do nothing but drag us further down the cycle so that we become confused, stressed, angry, lonely, etc. (the confused triple-headed person). And where does that lead us?

Back at the beginning of the cycle to keep repeating our sin again and again..

You should also notice that this spiral makes an inward progression that ends at a black hole. You see, what happens with our desire to medicate is that each time we do it, it takes a bit more stimulation to get us to the place that we have the same medicative results. We constantly need more. That is why the spiral is a spiral and not just a circle. It draws us in, deeper and deeper, until we reach the black hole—DEATH. James 1 says when sin is complete it will bring forth death: spiritual death, emotional death, and even physical death. The process is gradual most of the time, but it is guaranteed.

Take for example the person who starts out just looking at a

"Men's Health" magazine. Nothing wrong with that really. But there are some buff men that have their shirts off. They get excited about that, do a little lusting and masturbate and then they decide to find some porn on the internet. At first it is "mild porn" and then they have a need to find more explicitly sexual pornography, etc. Before you know it that is not enough for them and they search for chat rooms. They start chatting dirty and eventually they decide to call and talk with someone. They won't meet. At least not this time.... But sooner or later chatting is not enough and they meet... and they have sex... and you know the rest of the story...



Our desire to medicate will take us further and further down this path of destruction. The results are guaranteed, but so is its destructive end.

So how do we break the cycle of sin in our lives?

I really think that there is only one opportunity for us to break the cycle. I think that we have to learn how to cope effectively and Biblically with our triggers.

If, when we realize that we are experiencing a trigger, we want relief (which we all do naturally) this is OK. However, this is where the discipline comes in. When we want relief we have to move from seeking to medicate our pain with acting out, to taking that need to medicate to the One who is the Great Physician—God. We have to go to Him, at this early stage, and tell Him what we are experiencing; what is going on with us; and ask Him for help. We have to do what 2 Cor. 10:5b says, “Take every thought captive to the obedience of Christ.” Every thought... not just some, but especially those that seek relief.

If we do this, we are able to kick ourselves out of the cycle of sin and find victory and freedom in Christ.

Is it that easy? Absolutely not. It is hard work. Many of you have not yet learned how to identify the triggers and that will be your first step. But with God’s help, it is doable.

Now, don’t think that this is just a struggler thing. It is not.

Here’s another example from my wife who does not struggle with SGA issues at all (thank God!). She is a nurse in ICU; a very stressful job. She is also a self-proclaimed chocoholic (any ladies relate to this?). Many times, when things are going bad at work (stress trigger), she says she can “hear” the candy machine calling her name (need for relief). She puts things in order with her patients (action/ritual) and sneaks out to the machine (more action) and eats a candy bar (medication). After she eats it she gets an insulin rush (sugar high) which makes

her feel all euphoric and wonderful only to be followed by a sugar low which makes her feel guilty and convicted because she knows that she shouldn't handle stress by eating. She then can easily slip into a shame cycle of self-loathing thinking that she is too fat (which she is not), out of control, etc. and the cycle begins again. [She told me I could share this as this diagram has helped her understand you and herself better.]

The same could be said of people who shop when they are triggered, spend money, drink coffee, become violent, use drugs or alcohol, etc. Same triggers, different courses of medication, different chemicals produced (sometimes), but all ending in the same results.

Well, I hope this makes some sense to you and is helpful to you in visualizing and getting a handle on what is taking place in your life. I would really encourage you to memorize the 2 Cor. 10:5b passage and the James 1:13-15 passage as these can help you in directing your thinking when you begin to think "RELIEF"—it will point you to Christ rather than to medication.

“Print the Truth About Islam!”

I read your article [A Short Look at Six World Religions](#). Why are you lying to people about Islam? The prophet Muhammad himself is quoted to have said to his followers that even he would not enter paradise without the mercy of Allah, and the prophets were all free of any kind of sin. The word is composed of the Arabic words “Al” meaning “the” and “ilah” meaning “God.” The word “Allah” means “the God,” “the

Creator," the only one worthy of worship. Who can help you except for the one who created the heavens and the earth? Who can hurt you except for the one who created the heavens and the earth? When Jesus, whom we love as one of our prophets known to us and Isa bin Maryam, Jesus the son of Mary was on the earth, drinking God's water and breathing God's air, who could have stopped God had He decided to destroy the earth including Jesus? Don't mix the creation and the Creator. Even the Christians cannot deny the singular power of Allah when they claim that He came in the form of Jesus (May Allah protect us from worshipping any figure of creation) Allah is one in control of everything. That belief may seem logical, but it is not a product of anybody's mind because the mind cannot create a reality that already exists. The identity of God for the creation is that of the creator. How can Allah be seen as distant when according to Islam, He is closer to you than your own jugular vein? Allah is said to have 70 times the love for His creation that a mother has for her child.

I am a white American and I am pleading to you out of brotherly love for you and the people you reach to get your facts straight and print the truth about Islam. Allah loves the believers who when they do wrong, they turn to Him in repentance, yet we all know that Allah does not like lying. The Word Islam means "submission." The way of all the prophets was submission to God. Noah (Nuh) preached submission to Allah, Moses (Musa) preached submission to Allah, and Jesus (Isa) preached submission to Allah and all other of the 124,000 or more prophets between Adam and Muhammad came with submission to Allah. To become Muslim, we say "La ilaha il lala Muhammad ur-rasululah mean that "There is none worthy of worship except Allah and Muhammad is his final messenger." Please come to Islam.

I think perhaps as a white American, you are infusing your understanding of Islam with concepts about the biblical God. In effect, you are borrowing aspects of the God of the Bible

and applying them to Allah. Noah, Moses and Jesus did not preach submission to Allah; they preached about a RELATIONSHIP with Yahweh, who is not the same as Allah.

I am not lying to anyone about Islam. I think perhaps you are mistaken about both what I said and the nature of the one true God, whose name is "I AM," and Who has also revealed Himself to be the loving Daddy (Abba) who is full of grace and truth. There is no grace in Allah. There is only the legalism of submission without personal intimacy.

You pleaded with me to come to Islam. I plead with you, please come to a PERSON—Jesus. He IS true Christianity.

Sue Bohlin
Probe Ministries

“Is Magic: The Gathering’ OK For Kids?”

This article has been removed while we research this topic again.

“How Do I Encourage My Gender Role-Reversed Kids?”

Thank you so much for [your commentary](#) on encouraging our children to feel blessed in their own unique gender. I have a

boy (6) and a girl (7) (and a child of unknown gender on the way). I was really nervous about raising a little boy, because I am one of two girls in my family, and had an absentee father for most of my life.

My little boy is the love of my life. He is so loving and sensitive. His dad has trouble dealing with this side of him. He also has many male qualities, but my girl child is rather rough and teases him unmercifully. How can I encourage them despite their apparent role reversals?

You brought up SUCH a great question, and I wanted to provide as powerful an answer as I could, so I asked a good friend for whom same-sex attraction is part of his story. God has done a huge work of grace in his life to bring him to the point where he can truly enjoy being a man, and has been healed from some of the woundings that came from not being supported in his masculinity when he was a boy. This was his answer for you, and I couldn't be more pleased with what he wrote:

It's OK to be nervous about raising a boy. I think that's natural. However, there are many very helpful resources out right now that will help you in guiding your little man in the right way (i.e., Dr. James Dobson's *Raising Boys* etc.). Dad is perhaps the most important factor in guiding the young man into gender security. Even though Dad might have difficulty dealing with sensitivity and other "less masculine" traits, I urge Dad to look at Jesus, study our Savior, see what godly masculinity is. Come to grips with the fact that what our society deems masculine is often brutal cruelty. The ultimate guidebook for healthy gender security is none other than the Bible and Jesus is the ultimate example of the godly MAN.

That having been said, in the early years, I believe that it is very important to make sure your children are taught good manners and how to be accepting of people that aren't like themselves—even if they are siblings. If your little girl

picks on or teases your little boy, I would encourage you to stop that behavior—through discipline, through reasoning or any other effective method. Your little boy must have an advocate in this early stage of life that is present and visible. It really is best if it is Dad but certainly someone he loves and trusts. And little girl must be taught to respect not only other people but the other gender as well.

On a more scientific note, there is a theory called the neuro-endocrine theory. This theory states that anywhere from the 8th to the 12th week of gestation, there is a hormone wash that is released in the womb that kind of kick-starts the development of gender depending on the chromosome makeup (xx being female and xy being male). Sometimes the hormone wash is not as strong as at others and the process by which the masculine moves into the left brain and the feminine moves into the right brain is not fully completed. This is not to say that any child is less male or female or more so. But it does apparently make some male children more sensitive and creative (right brain) and some female children more aggressive and decisive (left brain). It's not a bad thing or a good thing. Simply a scientific explanation of why some male children might be a bit more sensitive etc.

Hope this helps!

Sue Bohlin

Probe Ministries

“Where Does Scripture Say

That Men Should be Strong and Women Should be Soft?"

Re: God's order for the "strong, leader" capabilities of men, and the "soft, nurturing" capabilities of women.

Chapter and verse, please, where is this laid out in scripture?

In the Bible we seem to have a wide mix of all characteristics in both genders, and no specific statement that "strong" characteristics belong only to men, and "soft" only to women.

Hi _____,

Thanks for your letter.

Re: God's order for the "strong, leader" capabilities of men, and the "soft, nurturing" capabilities of women. Chapter and verse, please, where is this laid out in scripture?

Well, I was thinking of Joshua 1:6-9, where Joshua is exhorted three times to be strong. And I was thinking of the role of the helpmate in Genesis 2, where Eve was created to respond and complement Adam, and a wife's responsibility is further spelled out in the New Testament to submit to and respect her husband. Are there "chapter and verse" delineations where the observations about men and women are laid out? No, I don't think so. We can't point to specific chapters and verses for many of the things we believe (there is no specific verse, for instance, that says "abortion is sin" or "do not go into pornographic chat rooms"), but I do think we can draw conclusions based on our observations of life that correspond with what we DO know in scripture.

In the Bible we seem to have a wide mix of all characteristics in both genders, and no specific statement

that “strong” characteristics belong only to men, and “soft” only to women.

I agree, we do have a wide mix of all characteristics in both genders, and I see problems that arise when men and women go against the way we were created to be. For instance, when men become passive, weak responders (Adam, Ahab) and when women become harsh controllers (Jezebel, Michal, Rebekah).

I would agree with you that strength is not a male-only characteristic, for we see many examples of strong, godly women in scripture. But that doesn't cancel out God's call for men to be strong. (For instance, the qualifications of elder and deacon in the pastoral epistles.)

However, the concept of a “soft man” seems to call up unfortunate, unflattering images of milque-toast characters. Who wants a man to be spineless and too-easily influenced or intimidated? I don't see any place in scripture where wimps are held up as role models. ****BUT****—there is a huge difference between a “soft man,” and a “gentle man,” or a “sensitive man.” The Lord Jesus was hardly a soft man, but He was certainly gentle and sensitive, while at the same time charismatically attractive to the most masculine types of men.

I hope this has communicated my heart better than my article apparently did.

In His grip,

Sue Bohlin
Probe Ministries

“What’s God’s Plan for Sex in Marriage?”

I’m wondering if the bible addresses the issue of sexuality after marriage. Is sex only for pleasure acceptable once a couple is married? If so are there certain ways married couples can have sex? I.e., different positions that are appropriate and others that are not?

I look forward to the day when I have a wife and can enjoy these gifts, but I want to make sure that I’m doing it in a God honoring way.

It sure does! A whole book about sexuality after marriage! The Song of Solomon is extremely erotic, but it’s written in symbolism so a lot of people miss it if they’re looking for only the literal. For instance, the use of “fruit” usually refers to the husband’s genitals, and “garden” to the wife’s. God’s word on sex after marriage is “Eat, O friends, and drink; drink your fill, O lovers.” (SoS 5:1)

Jody and Linda Dillow have written two excellent books on God’s view of sex; Jody wrote *Solomon on Sex* (which is out of print, but you can find it used online), and Linda co-wrote (along with Lorraine Pintus) the book *Intimate Issues*. They offer three guidelines for discerning what God permits in sexual expression:

1. Is it prohibited in God’s word?
2. Is it beneficial? (In other words, does it harm people or hinder the sexual relationship?)
3. Does it involve anyone else?

Here’s their list of what God prohibits in His Word:

Fornication (immoral sex, which is any sex outside of marriage)

Adultery
Homosexuality
Impurity
Orgies
Prostitution
Lustful passions
Sodomy
Bestiality
Incest
Obscenity and coarse jokes

There is more freedom than there are restrictions for married couples. If God doesn't prohibit something, and it doesn't involve anyone else (whether through video, the internet, print media or in the flesh), and it's acceptable to both people, then God gives a green light and says, "Enjoy!"

The Dillows also provide six reasons God gave the gift of sex:

1. To create life
2. For intimate oneness
3. Knowledge
4. Pleasure
5. Defense against temptation
6. Comfort

As you can see, only one is procreation!

I hope this helps.

Sue Bohlin

“How Do You Treat Those in Heretical Churches?”

Define what it is to be a Christian? More importantly, how do you treat those in heretical churches? As brothers? With careful separation? Confrontationally?

Let me give some context for the questions; I come out of a cult or heretical church and am now in a mainline evangelical church after a conversion and great spiritual awakening.

The importance of these questions was demonstrated very clearly to me this last weekend as I spoke with a neighbor about some job difficulties that have been going on in his life for some time. I've always considered him a Christian because of his participation in church activities and the many conversations we've had on faith issues. Later, after reflecting on our conversation, I began to understand that what he calls “his faith” really means his religious culture. He does not believe/is NOT a believer/is NOT saved—in the sense that he is not willing to stake any risk on his beliefs. His belief is barely an intellectual one but by his actions and upon close examination even by his assertions he rejects a saving faith and relationship in a loving God in whom he can put his trust in the form of action.

I assume the reasonable and Christian response would be through a relationship based on grace and love—that those two will have the greatest impact. Where I run into difficulty is that having believed the lie, I never want anything to do with it again no matter what the form. So, to be able to defend the faith and more importantly to take ground, there has to be a point at which a separation occurs between Truth and what is not true. I think that is why Truth is often so offensive and why 1 Peter 3:16 is so important. With that said—any help?

Dear _____,

Your passion for truth and for souls to know the Lord Jesus in true relationship is a marvelous blessing! You honor God so greatly with your heart of understanding.

I think the simplest answer is to look to the Lord for how He handled those in the religious system of His day. He didn't paint whole groups of people with a single wide brush; He dealt with people individually. So He made a great separation between Himself and the Pharisees and leaders who were so addicted to their power and their system that they missed the Lord of Glory standing in front of them. Yet, He made Himself available to Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus, because they were genuine seekers after God and truth.

Since the Lord warned us to discern between sheep and wolves, we know there are people calling themselves Christians who are merely religious (or not Jewish or Muslim!). So I think you are right to look for someone who has trusted in Christ and has spiritual fruit to indicate new life within as the definition of a biblical Christian.

I think we need to show grace and truth and love to those in heretical churches so that those with eyes to see and ears to hear can have a chance to respond to truth. Jesus said, "If I be lifted up, I will lift all men to myself." So we need to lift Him up, with the unhappy understanding that some people won't care when they are shown Life and Truth.

I don't think a confrontational approach is wise because most often, being in a heretical church is a matter of spiritual deception rather than deliberate evasion or avoidance of the truth. So the wise thing to do is to pray that they will see where they're being deceived as a result of being exposed to the truth. The enemy of our souls is very crafty and he uses religions and systems as well as individuals.

Hope this helps.

“You’ve Got Feminism All Wrong!”

Dear Sue Bohlin,

I’m writing about your response to “[Probe Answers our E-Mail: Should a Woman Work or Stay Home with the Children?](#)” I would like to express my extreme disappointment in your answer.

First off, I should say that I am young Catholic and a strong feminist. I believe that you have feminism’s mission all wrong. You stated that the “feminist viewpoint values materials above people.” I find this highly contradictory to feminism! Feminism is about equality. Plain and simple. It is difficult to debate the fact that men and women are equal. If so, what does it matter if the father stays home with the children? Why should the female sacrifice her goals in life and be “submissive” to her husband? What makes it okay for the male to follow his goals and watch his wife’s be thrown away? Parenting is a two person thing. The idea that the man is the mighty breadwinner to whom the wife obeys without question passed in the 1950’s. It disgusts me to think that other young women like myself are reading your response. We’re living in the year 2001—the world has changed quite a bit since the time of the bible! Maybe Titus instructs women to stay at home, but we’re far from that. When the bible was written, women were treated badly. Virtually the only thing a woman was good for was cooking, cleaning, and childbearing. In case you haven’t noticed, women do quite a bit more than that today. The contributions women have made to society are immeasurable. If

you ask me, Jesus would never say to a female with aspiring hopes and dream the same as her husband, "You stay home because you are a woman, thus the only thing that should do it take care of the children and the household." I think Jesus would see the importance of strong parental roles in a child's life—but equally, both mother AND father. Raising a child where the mother is the only active parent in their life is as bad or worse then sticking the child in daycare their whole life!

There are two things that I would really like the reader to get out of this letter: first, feminism is about equality, not material things. Second, we are not living in the time of Jesus! We should try to be Christlike, not mimic the lifestyle of 33 AD!

Thanks for writing! I am anxious to reply to your letter, but I would like to know one thing first: Are you married? Secondly (I guess that's two things <grin>), how old are you?

Thanks so much,

Sue

Dear Sue,

Thanks you for your interest in my letter. After rereading it, I want to apologize for seeming...harsh. I'm just opinionated. I think your site is truly wonderful—I've had countless questions answered there.

As for your questions, no, I'm not married. I'm 14. I've never even had a boyfriend. (Actually, I spend most of my time at the library reading *Ms.* magazine! LOL)

Thanks again for your time—and your part in probe.org.

Thank you SO MUCH for your sweet message and apology and your honesty with me! I am truly delighted to hear that you like our web site and have benefitted from it, especially since

you're 14 and there's so much to learn. It's great that you're reading things from a Christian perspective to help you form your opinions and your worldview!

OK, to answer your thoughts about feminism. . .

First off, I should say that I am young Catholic and a strong feminist.

Not surprising, actually. Feminist philosophy has so permeated our culture that it's unusual to find people who haven't been brainwashed by its values and perspectives. Yes, "brainwashed" is a strong word to use, but it's just as true as the way Communists indoctrinated their students in the last century.

Of course, if you spend your free time in the library reading Ms magazine, you are doubly steeped in feminism!

I believe that you have feminism's mission all wrong.

Is it possible that there might be more to feminism than the "public face" that it presents? Is it possible that someone who has spent time investigating the underlying philosophies and values of feminism might have a perspective different from what the rest of the culture accepts without question? And finally, ::::said in a low but respectful voice:::: is it possible that someone who's 48 might know more about this subject than someone who's 14?

You stated that the "feminist viewpoint values materials above people." I find this highly contradictory to feminism! Feminism is about equality. Plain and simple.

Uh. . . no. It's not that simple, _____. Have you ever seen pictures of icebergs? A mountain of ice rises out of the water, but there is another 9/10ths of the iceberg submerged below the water. Feminism is something like that: there are

parts of this philosophy that remain hidden until you start digging. For instance, particularly as a Catholic, are you comfortable with feminism's strong insistence on unrestricted access to abortion for all women? Abortion is an essential part of true feminism. Are you comfortable with the strong link between feminism and a lesbian lifestyle? While there are many many feminists who truly enjoy their femininity and their relationships with men, many of the movers and shakers in feminism have bought into the belief that men are the enemy. Do you plan on marrying and having children? Feminism has an anti-family agenda because it sees children as a drain on women and sees women who stay home to care for children as parasites, choosing a path that has no value because women are not paid for it.

It is difficult to debate the fact that men and women are equal.

Equal in value, absolutely. Equal in function and role, no way! Equal does not mean "same." Men and women are not interchangeable. We have different strengths and gifts, and different perspectives. We not only have different bodies, we have different emotional and mental make-ups. The biology of maleness and femaleness is hard-wired into the brain. Feminism's mantra for many years has been that the only differences are those of plumbing and reproduction. (And those differences are despised. There is a contempt for a woman's capacity for carrying and nurturing babies because of the fact that it makes a woman more vulnerable and needful of care and protection. That's one reason feminists are so insistent on the need for across-the-board access to birth control and abortion, because getting pregnant is so distasteful and threatening to so many of them.)

If so, what does it matter if the father stays home with the children?

Because mothers and fathers are not interchangeable. They nurture children differently. When children are very young, they need their mothers more intensely than their fathers. (But please hear me: children need BOTH a mother AND a father. It's like asking, "Which do you need more, air or water?" We need both, but air is more immediately essential. It says no more about us not needing water than the idea that children don't need their fathers.)

Furthermore, God's intention is for men to be providers and protectors, and for women to be caregivers and nurturers. This is only construed as an indictment on women because of the way the culture has de-valued the contribution of women. Since we don't put a dollar amount on caregiving and nurturing, those contributions are dismissed as unimportant. (That's why I made my point about feminism being materialistic. Only those things that have been given monetary value are worth doing.) Feminism's contempt for women who are "only a housewife" or "only a mother" has spread to the rest of the culture, where many people hear "caregivers and nurturers" and snort their disapproval of such a lightweight role.

Maybe we ought to ask the kids who have grown up without the caregiving and nurturing, the kids who have had to raise themselves because their parents were so busy doing things that "mattered," if caregiving and nurturing is so unnecessary. And to go back to your original comment, if a father stays home with the kids and the mom works, *when the kids are very small* they are going to feel abandoned by their mother. That's just the way it works. It might not sound fair, but that's because mothers and fathers are not interchangeable.

Why should the female sacrifice her goals in life and be "submissive" to her husband?

OK, two subjects here: goals and submission.

If a woman sets her goals apart from God's values and intent for her life, they are worthless. Once we die and we stand before God, everything will be revealed for what it is. Those who have trusted in themselves and refused to submit to God and trust in Jesus will go to hell. Of what value will their goals be then? For those who HAVE trusted in Christ, if their goals were self-serving instead of God-serving, then everything they accomplished to meet those goals will burn up in the flames of God's judgment. (You can read about this in 1 Cor. 3:9-15.)

It's like the person who climbed the ladder of success and discovered his ladder was leaning against the wrong wall!

Concerning submission. Why should a wife submit to her husband? Because submission is what we were created to do! We submit first to the Lord and then to those who are in authority over us. I think you have a misunderstanding of submission as "mindless doormat." Biblical submission is a deliberate choice to use one's strengths and gifts to serve another, to fill up what is lacking, to support and respect and yield to another. That is neither mindless nor subservient. (And I think, by the way, that many people hear the word "submissive" and think "subservient." They are not the same thing.)

What makes it okay for the male to follow his goals and watch his wife's be thrown away?

Nothing. God's plan for husbands is that they love their wives the same way that Christ loves the church. That means serving her, supporting her, being her #1 fan, and, as one writer put it, stewarding his wife's gifts so that she becomes everything God wants her to be.

But some women think they ought to be able to pursue their own goals with no regard to what it will cost their family. Children grow up fast, and there is time for women to pursue

all kinds of goals after the children are no longer so needy and dependent on her. Are you familiar with Maria Shriver's book *Ten Things I Wish I'd Known Before I Went Out into the Real World*? She says, "You CAN have it all. . . just not at the same time." Try to find a kid who will say to his or her mother, "I'm so glad you went out there and pursued your goals, Mom—even though you weren't there for me and I was left alone to fend for myself so often, but that's OK, you're the only one who matters." Obviously, I'm being facetious, but the message of feminism is, "You're the only one who matters." It's tremendously selfish.

Parenting is a two person thing.

Yes, I agree.

The idea that the man is the mighty breadwinner to whom the wife obeys without question passed in the 1950's.

I will agree that the concept of the obedient wife who obeys without question was a fallacious concept that needed to be corrected. There is a difference between submission and obedience, although it's not a huge one. Wives are never commanded in scripture to obey their husbands, and there's a good reason for that. Obedience belongs in a relationship between non-equals because it's a power mis-match. I obey God and the governing authorities, my children obeyed me (...though not always. I gave birth to sinners <grin>). Those relationships are not between equals. If a husband-wife relationship, which Scripture explicitly says is one of spiritual equals, is one where the husband is authoritarian and the wife obeys him like a robot, there cannot be the emotional and spiritual intimacy that is God's plan for marriage.

It disgusts me to think that other young women like myself are reading your response. We're living in the year 2001—the

world has changed quite a bit since the time of the Bible!

We use a clock to tell time, not to tell truth.

The world may have changed, but people haven't. God's created order and His plan for human relationships hasn't changed. The Bible's relevance to our lives is just as vibrant as it was the day each word was originally written, because when God inspired the authors of each book He knew what would unfold in human history in the years to come, and His book has timeless concepts that are just as valid today as when they were written.

Maybe Titus instructs women to stay at home, but we're far from that.

_____, are you in a public school? Are there metal detectors at the doors of your school? Does your school have a lockdown plan for what happens if someone starts shooting a gun like at Columbine? Does your school have a problem with drugs? How many girls are pregnant? Are there any who bring their babies to school?

This is the world we live in—the world that is so far from the place of safety that it used to be. Yes, you're right, moms don't stay home much anymore. . .and the kids are paying for it. Families don't stay together much anymore. . . and the kids are paying for that, too. The amount of respect between family members has dropped dramatically as women demanded to be treated like men, so they are no longer respected the way they used to be, and kids don't respect their parents, and parents are afraid of their kids. . .who are paying for that, as well.

When the bible was written, women were treated badly. Virtually the only thing a woman was good for was cooking, cleaning, and childbearing. In case you haven't noticed,

women do quite a bit more than that today.

Yes, I have noticed. The Probe web site you tell me is “truly wonderful” is a woman’s creation and responsibility—mine. Among my women friends are published authors, speakers, company owners, entrepreneurs, engineers, marketers, trainers, teachers, real estate investors, and doctors. And the Bible’s pattern for wise living is just as relevant and life-giving to these women as it ever was.

The contributions women have made to society are immeasurable. If you ask me, Jesus would never say to a female with aspiring hopes and dream the same as her husband, “You stay home because you are a woman, thus the only thing that should do is take care of the children and the household.”

I agree. The Bible doesn’t limit women to only caring for children and homes. There are many ministry opportunities that women are called to give themselves to regardless of family status. There are ways to have a home-based business that does not sacrifice the best interests of a family and smoothly running home. You might want to read Proverbs 31.

I think Jesus would see the importance of strong parental roles in a child’s life—but equally, both mother AND father. Raising a child where the mother is the only active parent in their life is as bad or worse than sticking the child in daycare their whole life!

I think perhaps you’re either engaging in hyperbole or you really haven’t thought through what you’re saying. There is no way that a mother’s input and love is more harmful to children than the stress of daycare. (Assuming the mother is not evil or mentally ill. It’s too bad I have to mention exceptions like this.) You might not know what daycare centers are like.

They cannot come close to the power of a mother's love and just "being there" with and for her child. Talk to me about this 15 years from now!

I'm glad you wrote, and I hope you think about these things. I invite you to read another article I wrote, "[Ten Lies of Feminism](#)," and see what you think. God bless you, _____!

Warmly,

Sue

"Can You Suggest Reasons Why I Am a Lesbian?"

I just read Kerby Anderson's article on [Homosexual Theology](#). Very well written, although I do disagree on some points. I consider myself homosexual. I am a 36 year-old female. As far back as I can remember, from the age of 2 or 3, I've have "felt" like a boy. This goes beyond just same-sex attractions. It goes into wanting to play army and trucks as a child, rather than play with dolls and, eventually, being sexually attracted to females (even in grade school), rather than males. For me, as I can only speak for myself, it is not all about sex. I would rather share my life with a female, even if we never had sex. I want the same thing I assume most heterosexuals want; a home, family, decent job, vacation time, and hope for a healthy, happy future.

I guess my question for you is, what do you think caused my homosexuality? I grew up in the "All-American Family." Stay at home mom, dad who always worked, middle-class, church on Sundays. I am the youngest of three, and the only girl. I was

always encouraged to act and dress like a female by my parents. I had no doubt about my parents love for me and felt very secure and safe in my environment. I grew up about as “normal” as anyone can in American. So, can you shed any light? Thanks, _____

Dear _____,

Kerby Anderson forwarded your e-mail to me because I am very familiar with the homosexuality issue.

The difficulty in trying to explain the foundations for another person’s same gender attraction is always increased when we are only given selective details. What you wrote to Kerby isn’t your whole story, and you couldn’t possibly be able to GIVE your whole story, especially when the most important parts are what happened inside your head and heart.

One of the things we have discovered over the past several years is that the contributing factors to homosexuality include not only events (such as sexual abuse) and relationships (especially with parents), but how a child PERCEIVES events and relationships. For example, dads can show and tell their love in one way, but if his son or daughter doesn’t hear it or see it, s/he can feel unloved even though the love was there. Parents can feel that they are accepting their children, but sometimes the kids don’t feel that acceptance. And that makes sense, since we are all broken people living in a fallen world, and sometimes our “love receptors” are broken just like a radio can be broken and not receive the radio waves that would translate into sound if it weren’t broken.

There is an intriguing detail you DID include, which was being sexually attracted to females, even in grade school. Emotionally healthy children do not experience sexual attraction until adolescence. (Kids sometimes develop crushes on other kids, but it’s an intense emotional attraction, not a

sexual attraction.) Becoming sexual at an early age isn't normal; all the examples I ever heard of were the result of sexual exposure (which is actually sexual abuse) at an early age.

So I would suggest there are parts to your story—your true relationship with your parents, possible experiences you don't mention—that are a big part of what you have experienced. Having boy-like interests at an early age, in and of itself, doesn't say that anything was wrong; there is a wide spectrum of what it means to be a female, just as there is a wide spectrum of what it means to be male. And that, I believe, is by divine design, because God is delighted to make people with great variety. But that doesn't mean He gave you same-gender attraction, and it doesn't mean He made you gay. It means something happened, even if you don't know what it is. Homosexuality is really about gender confusion, and something interfered with you embracing your femininity if you have closed yourself off from wanting intimate relationships with men.

I hope this helps.

Most respectfully,

Sue Bohlin
Probe Ministries

“Help! I’m a Gay Christian”

Thanks for being willing to help me. Here's the deal:

I'm 18 and I've known for a while now that I'm gay. Yep, GAY!!!!!! But I'm also a Christian, and those two don't usually mix well. I don't have a boyfriend or anything. The problem is

I don't know whether I should accept my nature and try and be both a Christian devoted to others and God who just happens to like men, or to fight my nature and be alone for all my life.

What is your opinion on gay people? What do you think?

1. The world tells you that you have two choices: Accept that you're gay and find a way to be a gay Christian even though the Bible says not to, or be alone and lonely forever. I would suggest those choices are a lie.

You can't glorify God in gay relationships, especially sexual relationships. Sex was created (among other reasons) to show us what "unity within diversity" is, so we can see a physical demonstration of the unity of Christ and the church. Just as Jesus is very different from us (the church) as His bride yet the two become one, God-glorifying sex can only be between two very different (i.e., male and female) people who become one. The very biology of sex shows us that sex was intended to be heterosexual.

2. If God's intention in His creation is holy heterosexuality, then all of us have the *capacity* for it. That's why there are people ministering to those with same gender attraction (SGA), showing them how to move out of what feels normal but isn't, into heterosexual attraction. It's not fast, it's not easy, but it IS possible. It's about finding ways to relate in a healthy, nonsexual way with other men, and doing it in the power of the Holy Spirit. Which He is happy to give as we abide in Christ. (That's the key, but it's easier to talk about than to live, moment by moment. Nonetheless, that's how others have moved from being strugglers to being overcomers.)

There are a number of websites where you can read stories and get real help, including online message boards for encouragement. Here's a good place to start: Living Hope Ministries. This one has a lot of other sites listed, as well as a web forum where you can find people to talk to.

<http://www.livehope.org>

The bottom line is, THERE IS HOPE. You don't have to live with the false choice of either being separated from God because of your sexuality, or alone and lonely because of it.

3. In terms of my opinion of gay people? Well, God passionately loves gay people, so who am I to argue with that? ::::smile:::: He grieves when men are attracted to men and women are attracted to women, because it means that something went wrong somewhere, whether biology or psychology or whatever. But it doesn't make the PERSON bad!!! I think that the reason gay people are in so much pain isn't because the world hates gays and is homophobic, which is the politically correct explanation you get these days, but it's because something went wrong and it's painful not to be able to relate correctly and healthily to people of the opposite sex.

And God has power to help us with problems like that, even though it's not easy—by ANY means—to change.

4. One last thing. Until their mid-20's or so, some people's sexuality is fluid. It's changeable. Surging hormones can create some alarming and disturbing feelings. It doesn't necessarily mean someone is hard-wired to be gay. That's a good reason not to act on it, totally apart from the moral issue of being sexually active outside of marriage.

Sue Bohlin
Probe Ministries