“How Can I Help My Gay Friend?”

I have a friend who confessed to me that she was gay. I was shocked…but yet…something inside of me knew that there was something different about her. I have been searching of ways to tell her about the truth. Please understand….it has been so easy for me to lead others to the truth…but with her…I’m baffled. I have been speaking to her over the Internet mostly. She has had close family members that have been diagnosed with cancer, etc. I’ve been helping her stand on the word by giving her Biblical scriptures on healing. I “gently” tell her in a roundabout way (when given the opportunity) about sins in our lives etc…etc…etc…

I’m trying to tell her that God loves her but not the way she’s living her life. As you can tell… I’m even having a hard time explaining it to you. I wish I knew of a book that helps Christians talk to gays to lead them to the truth. She once told me that men were so iffy and that her girlfriends treated her better. I should have caught on then…but I didn’t. I don’t think she’s ready to give up this lifestyle…but I can’t go on acting as though it’s not a problem. I try to stay away from talking about this issue with her. She has a girlfriend at this time and lives about 3 hours from where I live. I just thought you may know of something that may help me minister to her or help me to understand before I leap out there and push her further away from knowing the truth. She is always sending me thank you notes saying that she knows that there was a reason why we met and that she would not be where she is with God if we didn’t meet. Honestly…I couldn’t believe her attitude. She started going to a Christian church…joined a Bible study from Genesis to Revelation… stood in faith for a job (when she lost hers). It’s like God is doing all He can to show her He’s real, but deep down in my heart…I feel she’s

lost in another way. Before I keep going on….I'll close and ask again…. Do you know of anything that will help me to reach her God's way?

I am so glad to hear of your friendship with this dear lady who needs the freedom Jesus offers!! You should know that almost all the people involved in ministries to those with unwanted homosexuality (you can check out Restored Hope Network and Living Hope Ministries) did so because of friends and family who showed a willingness to BE THERE for them and love them through the process of change.

Yes, there is a book I would recommend for women, *Out of Egypt* by Jeanette Howard. May I suggest that a good way to offer it is to say, "If you ever get to the point where your life isn't working for you, you might want to read this book." It's not threatening, and it leaves the door open to pursue something different when the Lord reveals truth to her. And nothing will change apart from HIM allowing her to see the truth instead of being deceived by the enemy. Which is why your prayers for her are of utmost importance.

If you want to educate yourself to better know how to minister to her, read *Someone I Love Is Gay* by Anita Worthen and Bob Davies. It's written for friends and family of those in the lifestyle.

I hope this helps; I know these resources have helped many, many other people in exactly your shoes.

In His grip,

Sue

“Should a Woman Work or Stay Home with Children?”

Dear Sue,

I was wondering if you could help me to understand more about your studies from the Bible on the lies of the church. From my understanding from Titus women are called to be at home and bring up the children. Of course some single mothers have to work. But, when the husband is the bread winner, the women is called to bring up the children, and maintain the home. Of, course our society tells us for a women to be productive she must work to be fullfilled. Can you explain a little bit more about what the implications are from the Bible. Thank you. Because I don’t know what to think? My mother has taught me to work, and the church teaches to stay home.

I’m so glad you wrote me!! I can understand why you might be confused since there are MAJORLY conflicting views on the role of women in our society and even in many churches.

You’re right, Titus does instruct women with children to be industrious and to take care of our children. It’s important for women to keep our “Focus on the Family,” so to speak, because God has ordained for the family to be the place where children are loved and taught and raised to become the people He intends for them to be. I think that whenever possible, in whatever way possible, mothers should be the caretakers of their children because no one can do as good a job as a parent.

But feminism has changed the view of the wife and mother. That worldview says that the only work that matters is work for which you get paid money. It says that the only way to be fulfilled is to produce something that has economic value, either products or services. That’s because the feminist

viewpoint values material things above people. And the feminist viewpoint really disrespects children and the women who care for their own children. For a philosophy that is supposed to empower women, it's actually very disrespectful toward women unless they agree with feminism's very narrow perspective on what is acceptable.

A big reason for that is that feminism is, at its heart, humanistic. That means that they value mankind as the highest thing there is. No room for the God of the Bible or for God's values and commandments, nor for His heart toward women and the family. So feminism doesn't care that God longs for children to feel safe and loved and cared for, and the best place for that to happen is with a mom who's intensely THERE, with and for her children, instead of a daycare center. Feminism also doesn't understand that a Christian woman who invests her time and energies and gifts into her family will receive eternal rewards. The only thing that matters to a feminist mindset is money and the approval of the world.

Should a woman work? I don't know any who don't. Some get paid for their labor in dollars, and others get paid in other ways. Like the joy of creating a well-run, balanced home for a family that's not stressed out all the time because there's never enough time to get everything done.

In Proverbs 31, the "excellent wife" has several home-based businesses. She keeps a well-run home, is a great wife and mother, and she works at a business. The biblical pattern is that godly women are industrious workers (as opposed to busybodies who gossip and chatter all day). There are business women mentioned in the New Testament whom Paul praises as godly women. And then, young women are instructed to be homemakers, taking care of their children and homes. (There weren't many choices for employment for women in that culture.) There is no one-size-fits-all pattern for all women.

God's plan is that we all work. It's a sin to be a lazy do-

nothing. The question isn't about working or not working, it's WHERE you work and how you get paid. The other question is, will your children suffer because you work? Or does the fact that you work mean your children will have food to eat and clothes to wear? It's not a cut-and-dried answer. What you need to do is what God leads YOU to do after praying and seeking His face.

I heard a pastor say on the radio recently that a young mother came to him and said, "I would love to stay home and care for my toddler, but I have to work. We don't have enough money for me to stay home." He had occasion to visit her and was stunned; they lived in a large, new home, with two late-model luxury vehicles in the driveway. Their problem wasn't that they didn't have enough money for her to be her child's caretaker; their problem was that they had chosen a standard of living that put things above people. If they moved to a smaller house and older, less expensive cars, they could have done it.

But then, there are people who literally cannot make it on the husband's salary because it really isn't enough. God understands that, too. And in that case, a wife's outside job is His gift and His provision for a family. That's why it's not a cut-and-dried issue.

If you have children, you might ask why working outside the home is so important. Because you can? Because you're smart? Because you're trained? Because Mom thinks you should? It's pretty cool when gifted, smart, capable women pour all those strengths into their children instead of the workplace. The whole family benefits. Especially in the long run. Because, now that my children are young adults, I see the benefits of pouring myself into them, and I am so very glad I did.

I hope this helps. Feel free to write back if I didn't really answer your specific needs or questions.

Sue

“Can You Give Examples of Subtle Invalidation?”

In Kerby Anderson’s article Why Marriages Fail he writes, “Invalidation is a pattern in which one partner subtly or directly puts down the thoughts, feelings, or character of the other.”

What other examples can you give of subtle invalidation?

I decided to answer your question because it’s helpful to have a woman’s perspective in addition to a man’s (as what you read in Kerby’s excellent essay). Here’s what I came up with:

- *Rolling the eyes at something a spouse says*
- *Ignoring the spouse when they’re talking*
- *A dismissing or contemptuous tone of voice in saying things like “I don’t think so” or “You’re wrong” or “Like you would know anything about that!” (Note: those very words can be used in affectionate banter when said with a smile and in the context of a spouse’s strengths.)*
- *Any form of sarcasm*
- *Making plans without consulting the spouse (which would affect the spouse)*
- *Ridiculing a spouse’s dreams and hopes, even in jest*
- *Continually rejecting a spouse’s romantic or sexual overtures*
- *Choosing to spend time chatting with internet friends (especially of the opposite sex) over being with one’s spouse*
- *Not acknowledging the heart issues behind the words that a spouse shares*

• Not looking at a spouse when they're talking
• Being critical of or ridiculing a spouse in public, even in jest
• In a dispute or disagreement that involves the children, ganging up with them against the spouse
• Saying things to one's kids like "Oh, your mother is just being wierd (stupid, illogical, emotional, etc.) again" or "Don't listen to your father, he doesn't know what he's talking about"

I hope this helps.

Sue Bohlin
Probe Ministries

"Help Me Understand Fasting"

The spiritual discipline of fasting is new to me and I have several questions about it.

1. When I felt the Spirit move me to fast I was unsure of the direction. I often hear that still small voice and try my best to follow it immediately. Do I need a specific direction in order to fast?

2. I usually fast for 24 hours but I had a pastor suggest we fast for our government officials for half a day. Other than divine direction is there a specific duration that is acceptable?

3. If I fast for a specific desire, not a worldly type but a family type desire, will God honor it if I unconsciously slip and eat then repent and continue fasting?

4. Are there wrong reasons to fast, other than selfish reasons of course?

> *1. When I felt the Spirit move me to fast I was unsure of the direction. I often hear that still small voice and try my best to follow it immediately. Do I need a specific direction in order to fast?*

No. But it might be good to be still before Him, in listening prayer, asking, "What more do You want to tell me about fasting, Lord?" Then listen until He gives further word.

> *2. I usually fast for 24 hours but I had a pastor suggest we fast for our government officials for half a day. Other than divine direction is there a specific duration that is acceptable?*

We operate under grace. The Lord is pleased with whatever you give Him, as long as it's His idea and His power and not something you do in your own flesh (in your own power without relying on Him). There is no prescribed length of time for a biblical fast; divine direction is the ONLY way to go! When someone makes a suggestion, go to the Lord and ask Him, "Is this what You want me to do?" The answer will either be a green light, yes, go ahead, or a red light, a check in your spirit, and He has a different answer for you.

> *3. If I fast for a specific desire, not a worldly type but a family type desire, will God honor it if I unconsciously slip and eat then repent and continue fasting?*

I believe so. He judges our hearts and knows our intentions. He wants us to succeed more than we do! There is NO condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus (Rom 8:1), so just pick yourself up again and keep on going.

> *4. Are there wrong reasons to fast, other than selfish*

reasons of course?

Other than self-centered reasons? Only disobedience. For instance, a person might have good and godly intentions to fast, but the Lord says don't. He knows that he has a blood sugar imbalance but the person doesn't, and fasting would be dangerous.

Hope this helps!

Sue Bohlin
Probe Ministries

"Do You Know Why My Dreams Come True?"

I have been searching for a long time for the answer to a very curious question. I'm a 15 yr old boy, and for a long time I have been having dreams that come true. I'm not sure why. I was wondering if you had any educated guesses. On more than one occasion these dreams have saved my hide, and have never led me away from God. On the contrary, they have strengthened my faith in Him. But the only thing they don't "shine a light on" is why. I remind myself every day to be humble, but I can't help wondering if I'm "special." I was just wondering if you could give me some insight. I am SURE it's not Satan, dreams aren't my only specialty. If I concentrate—really hard—I can see through deception. I'm also an empath: I can feel other people's emotions. And finally, I can heal people, but not like they do on tv. It's different. It's more like I feel their pain and fix that, not their body. Anyways, if you have any ideas, please let me know.

P.S.- I’m not crazy, promise.

Hi _____,

First of all, I believe you. You are describing a supernatural kind of life where the power comes from God and not yourself, and that is the kind of “abundant life” that Jesus was talking about bringing to us.

> *I have been having dreams that come true. I’m not sure why. I was wondering if you had any educated guesses. On more than one occasion these dreams have saved my hide, and have never led me away from God. On the contrary, they have strengthened my faith in Him. But the only thing they don’t “shine a light on” is why.*

Concerning your dreams—I think that God communicates to us in dreams all the time, but most of us aren’t listening. People in the Bible gave a great deal of weight to dreams, and God spoke to people through dreams fairly frequently. So your experience is within the boundaries of what is biblically valid. Others have written to me about the same thing, by the way. I think that as long as your dreams continue to draw you to God and strengthen your faith and relationship with Him, it’s a gift for which you can give thanks and enjoy. The important thing is to continue to ask Him for HIS wisdom and interpretation.

> *I remind myself every day to be humble, but I can’t help wondering if I’m “special.”*

Are you special? Absolutely—in the same way that God makes all of us special, and gives us special gifts, abilities, talents and passions, so that we can be like stained glass windows for His light to shine through with special, unique beauty. Please remember that God gives gifts to serve Him by serving others and not for our own enjoyment, although the exercise of our

gifts IS a blessing to us. So I encourage you to always be looking to see your gifts as a way to serve rather than to draw attention or glory to yourself.

> *I was just wondering if you could give me some insight. I am SURE it's not Satan, dreams aren't my only specialty. If I concentrate—really hard—I can see through deception.*

That sounds like it might be the spiritual gift of discernment, the ability to distinguish between spirits (1 Cor. 12:10). People with that gift are able to spot phonies and liars, as well as to tell when there is evil present. This is an ability that the Holy Spirit gives, and is not a natural ability. The purpose of this gift is to function like an early warning system for the Body of Christ, so the rest of us—who don't have this gift—can be warned of unseen realities that would hurt us or trick us.

> *I'm also an empath: I can feel other people's emotions. And finally, I can heal people, but not like they do on tv. It's different. It's more like I feel their pain and fix that, not their body. Anyways, if you have any ideas, please let me know.*

The gift of healings is also a spiritual gift (see 1 Cor. 12:9), and again, the purpose of this gift is to bless and serve others. It's entirely possible that God uses you as His channel of blessing to others to heal their emotional pain.

I do want to make sure, though, that you understand it is essential to be *excruciatingly* discerning about your dreams, exposing them and your interpretations of them to the light of Scripture. If God is speaking to you through your dreams, it will always—ALWAYS!—be consistent with what He has said in His Word, and never contradict either His Word or His character as revealed in His Word.

Let me know if this makes sense, and especially if these answers bring you peace. I do believe that God leads us and confirms things through the presence—and absence—of His peace.

In His grip,

Sue Bohlin
Probe Ministries

"Are Chemical Imbalances Real or a Worldly Idea?"

Some people in my family have been diagnosed with chemical imbalance in their brains. In the past I have been a reader of Jay Adams. How does this idea of chemical imbalances (CI) measure up to the Scriptures and spiritual problems? Is this CI something the world has come up with denying the spiritual or is it really legitimate? Where can I find scriptural or spiritual input on this subject? At this point, I believe it is primarily a spiritual problem. Please help!!

When it comes to depression, I have seen people dealing with it because of spiritual issues, emotional issues and physical issues (chemical imbalance). In fact, my husband had anemia-induced depression that was treated by taking anti-depressants for three months. If it were a spiritual or emotional issue, simply taking the meds for such a short period of time wouldn't have solved the problem.

Our brains are an organ, like our gall bladder, lungs and liver. They can develop physical problems and chemical imbalances; why would the brain be any different? *We* are not our brains. *We* are souls—personalities—that *have* a brain and

who live in a fallen world where physical brain problems arise.

I am aware of Christians who try to make everything a spiritual problem, but I think that's simplifying things too much. After all, scripture says we are made of three parts, spirit, soul and body (1 Thess. 5:23). To try and make depression (which is experienced in the emotions) solely a spiritual issue, doesn't make sense. Unfortunately, there is a lot of shame heaped on people for treating depression chemically, which I think is unnecessary shame. For instance, I know someone with manic-depression who NEEDS her medications to allow her to function, just as I need physical assistance to make up for orthopedic weakness from polio. There should be no shame in either my cane or my friend's medications; they are both a matter of accepting help for a real, physical problem.

Along a different line, another friend is a longtime school teacher and principal. She used to pooh-pooh the use of Ritalin for ADD and ADHD, until she researched the issue in depth and reversed her opinion. While there are certainly many kids who are taking it needlessly (quite possibly the majority of them), there are others who have a true chemical imbalance and benefit greatly from taking medication.

I hope this helps!

Sue Bohlin

Probe Ministries

“Who Was Lillith?”

I hope you can give me direction on the issue of Lillith from a biblical perspective. A female student brought up this question: Who was Lillith? I was ashamed that I could not tell her my position on the issue because, quite frankly, I didn’t know who Lillith was. I am a married Christian man so I may not be as tuned in to what our youth are concerned with as I once was. At 34 years, I don’t feel quite ancient either. I don’t want to turn an unsaved girl loose on a quest for knowledge on a decidedly pagan subject. Any help you can offer would be appreciated. BTW, our pastor simply told her she had been reading too much feminist propaganda, an answer that left her with doubts about him. Thanks for your help.

Well, it’s easy not to know who Lillith was because she’s not in the Bible. There is a “Lillith myth” which is no more than a story about Adam’s first wife. Here’s a link that will give you a full story:

http://www.webcom.com/~gnosis/lillith.html

The pastor’s dismissive comment about reading too much feminist propaganda may have been easy for him, but certainly wasn’t going to help HER any! Feminists have, indeed, adopted Lillith as a symbol of their philosophy, and when you read the stories you’ll see why, but that doesn’t tell a young unbelieving girl the truth: that Lillith belongs in the same category as Venus, Medusa and Aphrodite—make-believe for grownups!

Hope this helps. . .

Sue Bohlin
Probe Ministries

“Why Were Things Like Polygamy OK in the Old Testament But Not Now?”

What about the issues in the Old Testament with families like masters sleeping with their servants and men having many wives or even the issue of “inter-family” relationships and the like? Was it a population issue? When did the law change? Why was it okay then and not now?

Great question! The problem is, the Bible rarely makes commentary on historical events. If it did, we would see notations like “[and this was not only sinful but STUPID because God’s plan for marriage is one man, one woman for life, and bad things happen when we disobey His commandment].”

The fact that sinful, unwise behaviors are recorded (without commentary) in the Bible doesn’t mean it was OK any more than newspapers reporting on crime means they condone it. They’re both just telling you what happened.

Hope this helps!

Sue Bohlin
Probe Ministries

“Why Did God Reject Cain’s Offering?”

I was reading to my grandchild about Cain and Abel. The book we read said Cain was jealous of Abel because God rejected the sacrifice Cain made and accepted Abel’s. She asked me why, can you tell me?

The difference in the sacrifices was really about the difference in their hearts. If you read the actual story in Genesis 4, you will read that Abel, who was a rancher, made his offering of the first of his flock and of the “fat portions” of his flock. In other words, he gave God the first and the best of what he had. Cain, a farmer, only gave God “some” of his crops. He was greedy and self-centered and apparently wanted to keep the best for himself. God rejected Cain’s sacrifice because Cain rejected God’s right to his heart.

Hope this helps!

Sue Bohlin
Probe Ministries

“Why Were Women Unclean During Their Period in the Old Testament?”

Why were women unclean during their period in the Old Testament? Also, why were the number of unclean days different for the birth of a male child vs. a female child? Why doesn’t

this apply today?

> *Why were women unclean during their period in the Old Testament?*

We need to remember that being in a state of "uncleanness" was not the same as sin. It's more like being put on the bench during a game. I believe the Old Testament's emphasis on cleanness and uncleanness was to weave the importance of holiness and "separation unto the Lord" into the everyday understanding of what it meant to serve the true and living God. The distinction between cleanness and uncleanness functioned as a continual reminder of the difference between God (holy) and God's people (sinful and fallen).

Actually, I believe the ritual uncleanness of a woman's menstrual period had two purposes. First, it kept the messiness more contained by restraining her activities, especially sexually. Secondly, when sexual relations were forbidden for seven days each month, it was a built-in anticipation builder for both husband and wife for when they could come back together again. Many married couples know the joy of "reunion sex." God's "off-limits for seven days" rule insured "reunion sex" without somebody having to go away! <smile>

> *Also, why were the number of unclean days different for the birth of a male child vs. a female child?*

I couldn't find a single commentator who could come up with a reason apart from God's right to make the rules. However, since the New Testament teaching is equal value of the sexes (Gal. 3:28, "In Christ there is no male or female"), it may be that the purpose of the gender INequity in the Old Testament was to set up the contrast for the glory of grace in the New Testament.

> *Why doesn't this apply today?*

It doesn’t apply today because the purpose of the Old Testament civil law has been fulfilled. The laws were designed to protect and provide for the purity of the Jews until the Messiah came. Now, Christ has torn down the barrier between Jew and Gentile, and the Old Testament law was a huge part of that barrier—which is no longer necessary. (It should be noted that moral laws, such as what we find in the Ten Commandments, will never pass away because they are rooted in the very character of God.)

Hope this helps!

Sue Bohlin
Probe Ministries