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Recommended Citation

Maxwell, C. Mervyn, "Can You Answer This?" (1969). *Faculty Publications*. 3842.
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Can You Answer This?



Questions Youth Are Asking Today

by C. Mervyn Maxwell

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WHEN MOTHER GOT MAD

Question. My date and I had a real ball last night with several other couples at his sister's place. We didn't do anything bad, even by my mother's puritan standards—except get home late. But did she ever get teed off! I can stand her jazz (I guess), but why does she have to sound so sarcastic all the time? We had a real dogfight.

Answer. Your mother is at fault. She hasn't figured out yet why it is that you are no longer the obliging little junior girl you were only a few years ago, and she is at a loss to know just how to treat you. Her uncertainty and nervousness about you show up in the tone of her voice.

So far as I know, family counselors have yet to deal adequately with the effect tone of voice has on the people we talk to. Your mother's voice betrays her tensions, and, unbeknown to her, this is a major cause of her irritating you.

But you are at fault too. If you had a dogfight with her, it's an easy bet *you* didn't sound very nice either.

Next time your radar picks up one of these storms developing, ask God to help you keep your own voice calm and courteous—and do everything in your power to help your mother to sound at ease too. Ask her pleasantly why she wants you home earlier. Sit quietly and attentively while she answers.

More than likely you'll be amazed at the instant maturity your conversation assumes. You may also be amazed at how wise your mother seems under her new working conditons.

FAMILY WORSHIP

Question. Our oldest child has just turned five. Jim (my husband) and I have been thinking for a long time we'd like to have "family worship" like Jim's grandmother used to talk about before she died. Do you have any suggestions?

Answer. Here are a few:

1. Have a set time, such as at the end of your evening meal or at your child's bedtime. If your husband cannot be present now and then, go ahead with your child anyway.

2. Read a true story. I recommend the weekly *Our Little Friend*, available from the publishers of the *Signs* (The Pacific Press, Mountain View, California) and, of course, the wonderful *Bible Story* and *Bed-*

time Stories volumes that are deservedly so popular.

3. After the story have everyone kneel while either you or your husband offers a short prayer. Then get your child to pray. As soon as possible he should offer his own prayer; until then, let him follow you sentence by sentence as you prompt him. Here is a sample to begin with: "Dear Lord, thank You for a happy day. Bless Mother and Daddy. Please help me to be good. I love You. Amen."

4. Keep it short, sweet, and spiritual. Ten minutes is long enough from start to finish.

IS MARRYING YOUR OWN BUSINESS?

Question. My parents are making one grand fuss about the girl I intend to marry. Unfortunately, although I'm old enough to get killed for my country, I'm not old enough to get married without my parents' signature. I say who I marry is my own business.

Answer. But is the girl you marry strictly your own business?

The home is the basic unit of society. Our entire social structure depends ultimately on well-structured marriages.

Life goes on for years after a wedding. Your parents' happiness as they relate to you and their daughter-in-law is important to you if you are a thoughtful young man.

Your children's future welfare depends on their having a good mother and a happy home. The girl you marry is very definitely *their* business as well as yours.

If you were merely buying a used car to drive to classes for a couple of years, you'd check it out with the best mechanic you could find. Why not get all the best advice you can before signing on with a wife for the rest of your life?

HANDICAPPED

Question. I'm the handicapped person who wrote to you about the expense-paid move to California and then losing my job. You were so right when you said God was still leading me and that soon I would find a better job. I've found it now and I love it. My assignment, in part, is to visit bedridden patients and cheer them up. I just know I can do it. I even have my own private office! Everyone here is so good to me. God is too. Thanks so much for helping me. . . . You're so sweet.

Answer. Thanks! So are you! And you have strengthened my own faith.

[Based directly on actual correspondence—including the “You’re so sweet!”]

GOING TO HEAVEN

Question. I know what different people say about not wanting to go to heaven and what you say in reply. Put me down as one who wants to be there. But what bugs me is how I can know I can make it. I tell God I'm sorry for all my sins and goof-offs, but how can I be sure there aren't a lot of other things I don't even know about that will keep me out?

Answer. 1. Remember you are saved by believing, not by worrying. When the jail warden in Acts 16 asked Paul how he could be sure of being saved, Paul replied, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.”

2. Ask God sincerely to show you the sins that you cannot see, and then leave Him to reveal them to you in His own time and place. If God showed us all of our sins at once, we might be overwhelmed with discouragement. But Jesus died to save us, which means He really wants to save us. If you want to be saved, He will do everything that He can for you. If God gave us His Son, will He not also with Him “freely give us all things?”

3. When God forgives you, He doesn't merely forgive your sins; He forgives *you*. You, as a person, stand forgiven in the sight of your Creator through the mercies of Jesus Christ. “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” 1 John 1:9.

THE REAL GOD

Question. I've heard again and again that the Bible tells the truth about God; but which truth is the real truth? What it says about the New Testament God sounds very different to me from what it says about the Old Testament God. The Bible says the God of the Old Testament told the Jews to stone people, but when the Pharisees brought a woman to Jesus and asked Him if He thought she ought to be stoned, Jesus wouldn't let them do it. In the New Testament God tells us to love our enemies; in the Old Testament God tells the Israelites to kill their enemies—every man, woman, and child. When I read the Bible I get so confused about God that sometimes I wish “the real Mr. God would please stand up.”

Answer. It's the same God every time; only the circumstances are different.

God loved the Amorites, notorious though they were for their human sacrifices and temple prostitutes. Christ purposed to die for the Amorites as much as for any one else. Only after they “filled up their iniquity,” and even God could do them no more good, did He permit the Israelites to destroy them. Even then, any individual Amorite, such as Rahab and the members of the tribe of Gibeon, was forgiven and received into the Israelite community.

In the Old Testament, God commanded Achan to be stoned because his sin was a clear case of willful

rebellion committed in open defiance of a plainly announced regulation. In the New Testament Jesus refused to stone the woman taken in adultery because she had been seduced and deceived by persons whom she respected as spiritual leaders, and also because in her heart she was repentant.

The book of Revelation shows that someday in the future God will not only remove the angels who are holding back the winds of strife (Revelation 7:1-3), but will also commission angels to pour out His wrath (Revelation 15:7; 16:1) against an unrepentant humanity that has finally filled its cup of iniquity.

The God of both Testaments is the same. God revealed Himself to Moses as a God who was “merciful” yet who would “by no means clear the guilty.” Exodus 34:6-9. In the New Testament He saves “to the uttermost” those who come to Him through Christ, yet warns that if we “neglect so great salvation” there will remain nothing but “fiery indignation.” Hebrews 7:25; 2:3; 10:26-27.

Exploding Population

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will ensure an unprecedented global catastrophe.

You would disagree, then, with the nineteenth century philosophy that progress is inevitable?

I think that I would disagree that what we have now is progress. A situation in which more and more people are getting hungrier and hungrier and living in worse and worse conditions under the threat of catastrophe is not progress.

I don't think progress consists of having more and more people regardless of the conditions under which they live. We can see right now that we are in a very retrogressive trend. This trend is in a very large part blamable on the false faith that man will always be able to better himself and that man is eternally going to be able to produce a better life for any number of people. During the last ten years, worldwide, exactly the opposite has happened. The lot of the individual human being has been getting worse and worse. You don't even have to predict it. People over the last ten years have had progressively less and less to eat. We have already seen that science is incapable of maintaining the numbers of people we have now in an eternal state of progress. That is already proved.

We Seventh-day Adventists believe in a literal second coming of Christ as a divine solution to the problem; however, this does not preclude our joining forces with others in the betterment of mankind in any possible way before divine salvation occurs.

As you know, I'm not a Seventh-day Adventist, and I wouldn't want to get into a theological argument. All I can say as a scientist is that the idea of the world, in a sense, coming to an end in the next several decades is to me not an absurd idea at all. To me that is a very real possibility. I would like to think that God would want His will to work for the very best condition of all men all the time regardless of whether or not there was going to be a second coming of Christ.

[END]