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Can You Answer This?

Questions Youth Are Asking Today



by C. Mervyn Maxwell

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WHY NOT GIVE UP YOUR SABBATH?

Question. I for one appreciate the good work you Adventist people are doing. My wife had to spend three weeks in one of your hospitals, and she thought it was heaven on earth. I can even see some point in your Sabbath, so far as it goes. But it is odd. You people would have a far greater influence for good if you'd lay aside your Saturday Sabbath. For the sake of all the good you could do, I wish you would.

Answer. Thank you for your kind words and your goodwill. We do want to do as much good as we can. The highest good we want to do is to help bring people back into harmony—mentally, morally, physically, and socially—with their divine and loving Creator and with all men created in God's image. How could we do this while knowingly flouting one of the Creator's primary precepts? It is not *our* Sabbath day, but "the Sabbath of the Lord thy God."

The Sabbath commandment isn't incidental. It provides for a very special day of rest (physical), religious meditation (mental), and contemplation and public worship of God (spiritual and social), all in the context of concern for "every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people" (Revelation 14:6) and of fellowship with the Creator.

Thus the Sabbath symbolizes, summarizes, and climaxes our whole reason for existing as a church.

GRACE FOR TINY TOTS

Question. In one of your columns I read the prayer you suggested for a child to offer at bedtime. Our little boy is just now getting old enough to say grace (or the blessing, or whatever it should be called) at mealtime. Do you have any suggestions?

Answer. Many Christian families offer a prayer at mealtimes, following Christ's practice of "giving thanks" before "breaking bread." John 6:11.

When our boy was small we had him say, "Thank God for this good food. Amen." There's something fine about a little voice addressing God confidently with these direct, simple words.

At first we taught him to say the prayer word by word as we dictated it. Later, after he had learned to say it by himself, he often asked, "Let's say it all together." That's good too.

For a somewhat older child, a poetic form such as the following fits very well: "God is great, God is good, and we thank Him for this food. Amen."

IS FAITH HEALING ANY GOOD?

Question. A man who calls himself a "radio faith healer" keeps offering people handkerchiefs to make them well. They're supposed to send a donation in advance, of course. It sounds like a racket. If you ask me, the only kind of handkerchief that can help a sick person is a Kleenex.

Answer. The Bible says that when the Christian church was young and Paul was in Ephesus, "God did extraordinary miracles by the hands of Paul, so that handkerchiefs or aprons were carried away from his body to the sick, and diseases left them." Acts 19:11, 12, RSV.

The people were not healed by the pieces of cloth, of course, but by God in response to their faith in Him. Jesus made this point clear after a woman was healed of a twelve-year-long hemorrhage when she touched the fringe of his robe. He turned and said, "Take heart, daughter; your *faith* has made you well." Matthew 9:22, R.S.V.

Not by touching a hanky but because of their faith in God, some people have, I dare say, been healed after receiving a piece of cloth from a radio speaker. But much so-called "faith healing" is empty excitement. Some of it is even the result of "devils, working miracles." Revelation 16:14.

We should be wary of every "faith healer" who does not follow the Bible instructions in James 5. See the next question and answer.

BIBLE FAITH HEALING

Question. The other day I called on two sisters who had recently attended a "faith healing revival." They were nearly blind and had asked the evangelist to cure them. The preacher had laid his hands on them and asked them if they could see a bright chandelier above the platform. When they said they could, he had declared them "healed by the Lord Jesus." But when I called on them a few days later, they were still as purblind as ever. I was disappointed. My mother is very ill, and I had been thinking of taking her to the same revivalist. Now I don't know what to do.

Answer. This sort of thing unfortunately brings faith healing into disrepute. There is a true, honest faith healing, however. It does not involve shouting or an array of promotional gimmicks—just quiet prayer, earnest searching of heart, and a little symbolical olive

oil for the "anointing." It is described in James 5:14-16, RSV: "Is any among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord; and the prayer of faith will save the sick man, and the Lord will raise him up; and if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven. Therefore confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man has great power in its effects."

I personally have participated in several such quite earnest seasons of "prayer for the sick." Sometimes the patient has shown striking improvement in health within a few days. Sometimes the answer has come in a dramatically increased ability to endure the suffering with joy. In every case great blessing and help have come to the one in need. Why don't you seek out a Christian minister who believes in following this simple Biblical procedure and ask him to come and pray for your mother and anoint her while your faith reaches up to the Great Physician?

MANSION ALL READY

Question. We have just moved into a new house. Yesterday my husband and I spent the whole day sanding and painting. (We have to save money where we can.) Tired out, we sat down for evening worship with our little child and found that his memory verse for the day was John 14:2, 3, "I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself." The thought that our home in heaven will be all sandpapered and painted and ready for us seems so overwhelmingly good that I just have to tell somebody. So that's why I am writing you.

Answer. Thanks! It so happens that my wife and I are in the process of painting our new house too. We think we know what you mean.

PRAYER CONFLICT?

Question. Why does Jesus say that we ought to go into our closets to pray, when Daniel in the Old Testament was praised for praying three times a day at his open window?

Answer. Daniel was living in Babylon at the time, among people who did not believe in the true God. Apparently his manner of praying by an open window was one of the ways he witnessed to his faith in God. Perhaps he hoped to arouse the interest of the people in his worship. It was also an act of courage as events proved, for it was while he was thus praying on one occasion that he was arrested and thrown to the lions.

When Jesus, on the other hand, encouraged people to pray privately, circumstances were different. Everyone in the community believed in God, and public prayer had tended to become an occasion for showing off, as revealed by the famous prayer of the Pharisee: "Lord, I thank thee I am not as other men."

In telling us to pray privately Jesus apparently did not mean to forbid us always to pray in public. Though He Himself went off to solitary places to pray, He also prayed in the presence of the twelve disciples.

HOW TO GET "GROOVY"

Question. My science teacher is real groovy. Almost everyone thinks he's great. What I like best about him is that he never loses his cool, no matter what. Take me, though. I seem to be mad all the time. Of course sometimes I think they need what I tell them, but other times I'm terribly embarrassed afterwards. How can I be more like Mr. —?

Answer. 1. Make up your mind that there are to be *no exceptions*, that nobody needs your lip. If you get this clear once and for all, it will be much easier to decide what not to say when someone bothers you.

2. Make it a habit to think of all other people as your friends. This will soon change your way of talking to them, and soon many of them will actually become your friends. Then they won't irritate you so much.

3. Never let yourself think up angry speeches you'd like to deliver to so-and-so. When we blurt out "things we'd never think of saying," usually it's because we *did* think about saying them.

4. Tone up your nerves with (a) more sleep and (b) better food. It's my guess you live on a lot of pop and candy. So much sugar without good food to go with it drains the vitamin B out of your system. Vitamin B is vital to good nerves.

5. Ask God to help you in the morning when you get up, at night when you go to bed, and several times during the day. Believe He will help you; then when He reminds you to "cool it," accept His help. Read in your Bible Philippians 4:13.

DOES GOD REALLY CARE?

Question. Is God really human, and does He love me?

Answer. Theologians are ever alert to remind us that God is divine; *we* are human. God is immortal; we die. God knows everything; we know very little. God is all-powerful; we are puny. God is self-existent; we depend on Him for life. Paul said, "In Him we live, and move, and have our being." Acts 17:28.

But in the way I think you mean it, God is very, very "human" indeed. He is definitely *not* a thing, an impersonal force, an invisible mind. He cares like a friend and loves like a mother.

IS GOD CONCERNED ABOUT AN INSIGNIFICANT FRESHMAN?

Question. Does God really care about an insignificant little freshman like me? I've never been a class officer—not much more than a number that a computer adds a name to and sends to me on a bill. Does God care?

Answer. You'd trust God's own answer given through His Son Jesus, wouldn't you? Here it is in the Phillips translation:

"Two sparrows sell for a penny, don't they? Yet not a single sparrow falls to the ground without your Father's knowledge. The very hairs of your head are all numbered. Never be afraid, then—you are far more valuable than sparrows." Matthew 10:29-31.