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### Can You Answer This?

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# CAN YOU ANSWER THIS?

Questions  
Youth Are Asking Today



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## SITUATION ETHICS—AGAIN

**Situation ethics must have something going for it! I read what you said in a recent issue about the lie told by Rahab the harlot. OK, her lie was the action of a heathen woman and does not give us any authority to disobey the ninth commandment. I'll accept that, but what about other examples? The sixth commandment says, "Thou shall not kill," but didn't God many times—and sometimes in a most chilling manner—command the Israelites to go out and kill anyway? I don't think you can get around this example of situation ethics!**

It's a lot easier to get around this one than you imagine!

But I'm not trying to get around anything; in this column I am trying to arrive at God's truth—which, I believe, is what you're trying to do or you wouldn't have so gladly accepted the evidence about Rahab and her lie.

There are many synonyms in English for the verb "to kill," such as to murder, to massacre, to execute, to slay, and so on. Similarly, there are many words in Hebrew meaning to kill, one of which means "to murder." This is the Hebrew word *ratsach*. It is this word that is used in the sixth commandment. Thus the sixth commandment does not forbid all kinds of manslaughter; it forbids only murder, the killing of another man from hatred and personal enmity. In the Bible God *never* ordered the Israelites to murder (*ratsach*) anybody at any time or in any place. He did order the

destruction of the heathen Canaanites who, during half a millennium, had so degraded themselves that they had sinned away their day of grace. This killing was a judicial, or "execution type," of killing.

I think "situation ethicists" who want to base their philosophy on a supposed disregard by God of His own commandments, ought to study their Bibles better!

## IS ADVENTISM A CULT?

**I'd like to date a guy who is pretty interested in becoming a member of your church, but the teachers in the Bible college I attend say I mustn't do so because "SDA is a cult." It sounds pretty bad the way they say it—and it just doesn't fit my friend. He seems to me to be a saved Christian. There is a class taught here at my college on the cults, but I'd like to hear your side of the question. Is SDA a cult?**

The word "cult" is basically a harmless word meaning "worship," "religion," or "devotion." Among conservative Protestants, however, the word "cult" has come to be a hostile word used to describe an "unorthodox" church or theology, especially a denomination which says that Jesus was not truly divine, or that He really did not die and rise again, and so on. Seventh-day Adventism is occasionally called a "cult," not for this reason, but because some consider Adventists legalists who keep the Sabbath in order to earn salvation by works instead of accepting God's grace by faith.

There probably are some legalistic Adventists who keep the Sabbath in the hope of earning merit before God—just as there are probably some Methodists who abstain from alcohol, and some Baptists who attend Sunday School, and some Pentecostals who pray and testify, in the hope of earning merit before God. But Adventist theology emphatically teaches that we are to keep the Sabbath in gratitude and joy for what Jesus has done for us on the cross, and not at all with the idea that we can in the least pay for any of our sins. Many times Adventist ministers quote Ephesians 2:8, 9: "By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast." And also John 14:15: "If ye love Me, keep My commandments."

## WHAT'S IN JACOB'S DREAM FOR ME?

**What use is the Bible to people today? To me it seems so irrelevant. Take the story of Jacob's ladder; what does it matter to me that Jacob had a dream? What does the story have to say about me and my problems?**

The story says nothing about you. Neither, for that matter, does it say very much about Jacob.

What matters is that it says something about God. This is important, because God never changes; He is always the same. If we can find out what He was like at any time in the past, we can know what He is like now.

And what the story of Jacob's dream tells about God is this: "Behold, I am with you and will keep you wherever you go . . . ; I will not leave you." Genesis 28:15, RSV. It is the same thing that Jesus, the Son of God, said in Matthew 28:20, RSV: "Lo, I am with you always."

Jacob had done wrong; he had quarreled with his brother, lied to his father, and left home in fear to avoid being punished. The discovery that God was with even him had a revolutionary effect on his thinking. From that moment he began to be a new and better man.

If God was with Jacob under those circumstances, you can count on it that He is near you now; and if you will believe it, He will do wonders for you too.

"He is not far from each one of us, for 'In Him we live and move and have our being.'" Acts 17:27, 28, RSV.

## HOW TO GET ROLLING

The remark, "Good morning; what's good about it?" may be a joke for some people but it's not for me. I have a terrible time to get going in the morning. When the deadly countdown reaches "school bus," I'm far from ready to blast off. My first class is a mess. I can't seem to get myself in tune with the world till ten or eleven o'clock.

To get in tune when the alarm goes off, take a message from the Get-rolling Quartet:

First tenor: Be sure there is enough space between going to bed and getting up. Many teen-agers need more, not less, than eight hours sleep. (Sleep time, remember, does *not* include putting-up-your-hair time.)

Second tenor: When you get up, try ending your warm shower with a cold one. Lower the temperature gradually if you prefer, rubbing your hand over the places on your body where the cold spray hits. It will make you tingle—rather than tangle with your family.

Baritone: Get a good breakfast. Experts say you need lots of amino-acid building blocks from milk and other proteins to structure a healthy day, and plenty of blood sugar

from carbohydrates (cereals, not candy) to keep you sweet.

Bass: Basically you need a new-morning psyche. A few moments to read a passage from the Psalms or the Gospels and to talk with God—about your plans and His promises—will add hours of happiness to your day.

## ENCOURAGED

I am the person who wrote to ask you why my dear Christian mother had to suffer so much before she died. Your reply has been a source of great comfort and inspiration to me. I wonder what people do when they have trouble and grief without Christian faith. I am sure that if I did not believe in Jesus and His teachings of eternal life I would have no desire to continue this life on earth. Because of my faith I will continue to live each day as a witness for Christ. I am a teacher, and I live for my work with children. I will keep before me the vision of Christ's words, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant," and God's promise of seeing my beloved mother again. Thank you for your words of encouragement.

And many thanks to you for your testimony of Christian faith. May it bring encouragement to many others.

## WHY NOT JUST PREACH JESUS CHRIST?

I just read what that reader said in your last issue, that he likes Adventists and thinks their Sabbath is fine but wishes you would lay it aside. Why don't you just preach "Jesus"? You'd get a lot more people to accept Christianity if you did, and that would be fine with me.

Jesus came to the earth once Himself and preached "just Jesus." Did He succeed in getting everybody to accept Christianity? Sad to say, He did not.

Though He was very popular in the early part of His ministry, it wasn't long before the crowds were screaming for His death.

Jesus said, "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me."

Matthew 16:24. To a wealthy young executive He said, "Sell what you possess and give to the poor." Matthew 19:21, RSV. On the evening before He was crucified He said, "If ye love Me, keep My commandments." John 14:15.

The rich young executive, the Bible says, "went away sorrowful." So did many others. Some went away angry.

We think that we are preaching Jesus when we invite the world to do what He says, to keep His commandments. Revelation 14:12 says that those people who have "the faith of Jesus" "keep the commandments of God."

Will you join us in our attempt to preach the real Jesus?

## WHAT IS CHRIST WAITING FOR?

I don't agree with the person in your column who said he didn't care to have Christ come back. I'd like Him to come very soon. There are so many troubles and wars and illnesses in the world. I'd like Him to put an end to them all, whether I'm personally "ready" or not. Surely He wants to come; so why doesn't He?

It isn't His fault; it's ours. He gave us a job to do and we haven't done it yet. "This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world," He said; "and then shall the end come." Matthew 24:14. He made it clear who should preach it. To His followers He said, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations." Matthew 28:19. The gospel is being preached very widely today, but not yet in all the world. Millions have never yet heard it.

They must hear it, because God wants *everyone* to have a chance to be saved. Jesus died not for Americans or Germans or Frenchmen but for the whole world. John 3:16. God desires "all men" to be saved if possible. 1 Timothy 2:4. This is why He tarries. "The Lord is not slow about His promise as some count slowness, but is forbearing toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance." 2 Peter 3:9, RSV.

Can He count on you to do your part in telling others?