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### Can You Answer This?

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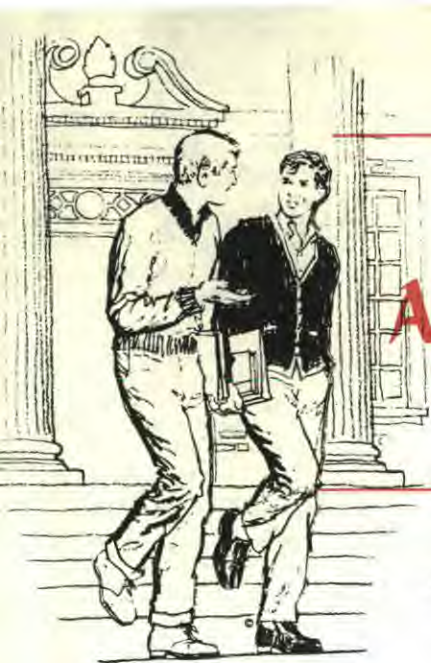
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# CAN YOU ANSWER THIS?

Questions  
Youth Are Asking Today



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## WHY WASH FEET IN CHURCH?

I attended a Seventh-day Adventist church last Saturday with my Adventist girl friend. When she found it was Communion day, she got a bit flustered and I wondered why. I found out soon enough when the minister announced the foot-washing service. I stayed for it, of course, because I wanted to see what it was like. In some ways it seemed to be a kind of "love happening." I'll have to admit it was rather impressive, but I can't say I really understood it—neither did my friend. Can you explain it to me?

Seventh-day Adventists wash one another's feet before celebrating the Lord's Supper because Jesus asked His followers to do so—just as He asked them to observe the supper. For example, about the Lord's Supper He said, "This do in remembrance of Me" (1 Corinthians 11:24); and about the foot washing He said, "If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you." John 13:14, 15.

The foot-washing service is rich with symbolic meaning. When Jesus first inaugurated it, His disciples were quarrelsome and jealous, ambitious for the highest offices in the government they supposed He was about to set up. When He had finished washing their feet, He could say to them, "Now ye are clean." John 13:10.

They were "clean" because they had become sorry for their selfishness and felt humble about themselves instead of proud. Today when we wash one another's feet we are expressing symbolically our love for one another, our willingness to help and serve one another, and our desire to forgive one another and to be forgiven. Sometimes we call the service simply the "foot-washing service," sometimes the "ordinance of humility," and sometimes—this is my favorite—the "fellowship of forgiveness."

## FOREKNOWLEDGE AND EVIL

The Bible says that God knows all about us even before we are born. He knows all our future actions. I often wonder how we can have any free will if God knows our destinies in advance.

This is a question that bothers Christian young people about as much as any other theological question they raise. The solution is just too simple: Foreknowledge is not the same as predestination. Read that over again and say it out loud a time or two!

You know that it rained yesterday; does this knowledge about the past mean that you made it rain yesterday? No, of course not. You know that it is raining today; does this knowledge about the present mean that you are making it rain right now? No, again. Then your knowledge (if you had it) that it was going to rain tomorrow, would not mean that you were necessarily

going to make it do so tomorrow. Foreknowledge is not predestination.

Rain, of course, does not have a will; people do, which complicates the matter a little. You, as a human being, could predict infallibly that your boyfriend, a person with a will of his own, would telephone you tomorrow, only if you were prepared to compel him to do so if he were not inclined to on his own. But you are not God. God knows whether or not your friend will call you; and because He is God, this does not mean that He has to compel your friend to do so in order to be able to make such a prediction. God can do many things that we are unable to do or even to understand.

The Bible makes it plain that God knows the end from the beginning. Isaiah 46:10. It also says emphatically that He allows us to make our great moral decisions for ourselves. For example, see Joshua 24:15.

## WHY THE TRAUMA ABOUT POT?

Why all the trauma about pot? Writers in the "Signs" regard it as one of the seven deadly sins. Grass is recognized as nonaddicting; as less harmful, in fact, than alcohol. Besides that, it's fun. I'm a Christian, and I enjoy it. I wonder why you don't get the real message about marijuana?

Alcohol is generally recognized to lie at the root of 50 percent of all fatal automobile accidents and

75 percent of all major crimes in the United States. How much "less harmful" than that would marijuana need to be in order to be mere fun?

Don't kid yourself that "grass" has been given a clear bill of health by the specialists. The returns are not all in yet by any means; yet even so there is already mounting evidence that marijuana induces a false sense of pleasure and personal capability that leads susceptible persons to commit acts they would otherwise avoid. Furthermore, persons who have a particular need for psychological stimulation become addicted to marijuana psychologically even if not biologically and from this are led to more pernicious drugs. You may be one of the relatively unsusceptible majority; as a Christian, however, do you want your *influence* to encourage someone else to get hooked who may be far weaker than yourself? Do you really want to send your mind, your most priceless possession, into a make-believe world?

Modern youth are impatient to see an end to the hypocrisies of the older generation, and there are many hypocrisies that ought to come to an end soon. It seems unspeakably sad, therefore, that today's youth fall so easily for mod-hypocrisies of their own—hypocritical love (promiscuous sex), hypocritical beauty (green eyelids, for example), and hypocritical dreams (such as drug-induced euphoria). In my book, the kids who are really swinging are the ones who are keeping their minds and bodies clean and are trying to avoid hypocrisies of every sort.

#### THE SONG OF SOLOMON

**Why is the Song of Solomon included in the Bible? Every time I think of this sexy love song being in the Bible I simply can't believe it!**

I think it's in the Bible because it's a beautiful song about love between two married people. God made sex, and He wants to assure us that married love can be beautiful.

On second thought, why *shouldn't* the Song of Solomon be in the Bible?

Try reading it sometime in the Moffatt translation.

#### HOW CAN I LOVE GOD?

**I know I'm supposed to love God, but I just can't bring myself to do it. Oh, yes, I know—I've heard it over and over—that "Jesus died for me, and that He would have died just for me even if there hadn't been another soul for Him to die for." But I know perfectly well that if I had never been born, He would have died just the same. He did die, in fact, long before I was even thought of. Anyway, He just seems too far away for me to love.**

Why not stop trying to love God? Apparently it isn't working very well.

Instead, let God love you!

The Bible says that even if we're heathen and do not love Him, nonetheless He is "not far from every one of us." Acts 17:27.

So you don't think He died for you, yet you'll concede, I'm sure, that He cared enough to die for others. You may not be able to recall any prayer He has answered for you, but you know He has answered other people's prayers.

This kind of Person, warm, friendly, understanding, helpful, is not far away from you. This means, He's close to you. In all His strength and kindness and creative intelligence He's right beside you—ready to show His love to you, if only you will let Him.

"Underneath," the Bible says—that is, if you will, underneath *you*—"are the everlasting arms"! Deuteronomy 33:27.

As we turn our thoughts to Him, "we may have no remarkable evidence at the time that the face of our Redeemer is bending over us in compassion and love, but this is even so. We may not feel His . . . touch, but His hand is upon us in love and pitying tenderness."

#### TROUBLESOME EX-HUSBAND

**How can I get my ex-husband to stop sending expensive gifts to my two little boys? He knows I can't match his generosity on my present earnings. He's trying to steal their love away from me. If he really loved them, he wouldn't have gone off with another woman.**

The fact that he doesn't love you doesn't prove that he doesn't love them. The quarrel that separates you from him is between the two of you. It would be unfair for you to add to your children's suffering by depriving them altogether of their father.

Children, especially boys, need a man in their lives if they are to grow up normally. Numerous case histories show that the mother who turns her children against their father ultimately turns them against herself.

The healthiest thing for you to do is to encourage your children to admire their father for his good points, even though you will have to tell them something of his faults in order to explain the separation. In order to do this adequately you will have to change your own basic attitude toward your former husband. This will be difficult, but God can help you.

In the Lord's Prayer Jesus taught us to say, "Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors." He then went on to state plainly, "If ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: but if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses."

I think you have always believed that a person should be forgiving. Have you ever thought that the only person you can forgive is someone who has wronged you; and that the only kind of "debtor" you can forgive is a person who "owes" you something? Your former husband has wronged you; he deeply owes you an apology. He then is the very person you must forgive if you would have your own sins forgiven.

If you will think of how much your sins have hurt others (especially the Lord Jesus), and of how patient God has been with you and of how He longs utterly to forgive you, your heart will be softened and you will want to forgive your husband and even to pray for his salvation. Then your attitude toward him in the presence of your children will change—and you can count on it, your boys will love you all the more for being more loving yourself.