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Questions Youth Are Asking Today

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Recommended Citation

Maxwell, C. Mervyn, "Questions Youth Are Asking Today" (1972). *Faculty Publications*. 3904.
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QUESTIONS YOUTH ARE ASKING TODAY



Answered by Mervyn Maxwell

HE LOVES ME; HE LOVES ME NOT

I'm in the sixth grade and I like this boy, but I don't know if he likes me. All the girls talk to him, and he talks back. Sometimes I think he likes me, but I can't be sure. Could you tell me how I could find out?

Boys are either shy about the girls they really like, or they're not shy.

If they're not shy, there's "no sweat." They let you know it plainly enough.

If they're shy, they're harder to figure out—because they may be very friendly with girls they don't really care for, and shy only with the one they truly like. But either way, they can't keep their secret. You'll catch them looking at you and suddenly turning their eyes away. Or blushing when they see you unexpectedly or when someone teases them about you. Or acting awkwardly when they talk to you and laughing loudly at your jokes.

So, shy or not shy, they show it if they like you.

If the boy you like doesn't even "look" at you, then you can be pretty sure he doesn't like you.

P.S. If you want him to start liking you, don't let him catch you looking at him! Girls have to use other techniques.

DID GOD HAVE A BEGINNING?

A fellow Christian asked me, "Who made God?" I told him that with God there is no beginning or end, but this didn't satisfy him. He said everything had a beginning and an end, even God. Could you give me an answer that might satisfy him?

Major premise: Everything must have a beginning and an end. Minor premise: God is a thing. Conclusion: Therefore God has a beginning and an end.

Would your friend be willing to

examine his major premise? Is it true that everything has a beginning and an end?

What about space? Did it have a beginning? If so, was there a time when there was no space? If so, was the universe at that time solid matter without space? If so, where did this solid matter come from—and when space began, where did the matter go?

Does space have an end, either temporally or spatially? I leave this to your imagination.

Did time begin? Will time have an end? If so, what was there before it began and what will come after it? If he says "eternity," ask him if eternity has an end. If so, what comes after that?

If he admits that the beginning and ending of some things are beyond his comprehension, tell him that the beginning and ending of God are beyond yours, and that you rely on the Bible: "From everlasting to everlasting, Thou art God." Psalm 90:2.

MAY A BIBLE CHRISTIAN GET A DIVORCE?

Could you please explain in your column how the privilege of taking a second wife or husband while the first is still living is justified in Scripture—if, that is, it is—while the two who were first married are still living, are baptized Christians, and had a Christian wedding? . . . Cannot the stronger Christian in the marriage win the erring party back to unity if he or she refuses to divorce and determines by God's grace to make the most of things as they are? . . . I like your magazine because you keep so close to Scripture.

The national legislation of the Old Testament Jews provided broadly for remarriage, but Jesus (as you evidently are aware) said

that this was not at all fitting for His followers. In response to the question, "Is it lawful to divorce one's wife for any cause?" Jesus replied that those who are married were "no longer two but one," and continued, "what therefore God has joined together, let no man put asunder." He then gave the only one ground on which divorce and remarriage is permissible: "Whoever divorces his wife, *except for unchastity*, and marries another, commits adultery." See Matthew 19:1-9 RSV.

It should be emphasized that Christ's counsel here is only a permission, not a recommendation, and certainly not a command. He elsewhere counseled His followers to forgive one another and in their dealing with sinners, to be as gracious as God Himself. Rather than see His followers divorce their marriage partners, God would much prefer to see them manifest His love to them. And He promises that many "unbelieving" partners will thus be "sanctified" by the faithful ones. See 1 Corinthians 7:12-16.

CHRISTIAN WIVES AND NONCHRISTIAN HUSBANDS

I was not a church member or living a Christian life when I met and married my husband four years ago. Now I'm trying to live a Christian life and bring up our little children to be Christians too. My husband was divorced once before. He never supports us. He is here today and gone tomorrow. What I would like to know is, do I, as far as the Bible is concerned, have the right to dissolve the marriage because I married when I was not in the faith?

I am puzzled that you wish to treat your husband worse now that you're a Christian than you did before you were a Christian. Would you mind if I tried to "answer" your letter by quoting from another one that came in the same mail?

"I have a difficult marriage and have been told by three marriage counselors (one of whom is well acquainted with him) that I ought to walk out on my husband. But I am still trying to make a go of it, grasping every word of love and

hope that the Bible enlightens me with; and sometimes I think I am going to make it, playing God's rules. I am not positive, for I am only human. Somehow as I continue to stick with it, His great love overflows to compensate for what is lacking in our marriage. It is not easy. I follow some of the counselor's advice. My husband was once a Christian but has left the church and changed drastically. But some days I feel that in his very weakness he looks to me for strength, and my strength is only from God. We must forgive, not seven times but seventy-times seven. If I left him, life could be easier, but I feel he would never see God if I did so—and leading people to God is the very reason for our being born."

QUESTIONS ABOUT V.D.

(1) **I am a girl 13 years old and have V.D. and don't want my mom and dad to know. Should I go to the doctor and have him tell them, or just wait until it goes away?**

(2) **What is V.D.? Everyone always teases me about it. I'm 14.**

Perhaps I should refer you to *Signs* health writer Dr. Harold Shryock (see p. 26); but since the basic facts about V.D. have been widely published, I'll give a brief answer here. V.D. is an abbreviation for venereal disease. The word "venereal" is derived from "Venus," the Roman goddess of love, and means "having to do with sexual love." Venereal diseases are those which are spread by infected persons during sexual intercourse.

There are at least five kinds of V.D., usually characterized at the onset by small ulcers of various sorts and, in some cases, by a discharge from the genital organs.

Gonorrhea and syphilis are the most common. In both, the early symptoms heal up after a while and go away—but the disease continues to work unseen. After a time complications are likely to develop that can cause fatal heart trouble, blindness, crippling, and insanity.

V.D. can generally be cured fairly readily if reported to a doctor early. By all means don't wait; tell a doctor right away!

But *do* wait till you're married (to a good man) before you have sex again. The health you save will be your own.

CAN I BE A CONSISTENT CHRISTIAN?

I always say to myself that I will be a Christian, but the next minute I'm back to my old ways. It's so discouraging. What should I do?

1. It is common for sincere Christians not to reach their ideals. Even the apostle Paul, a wonderful mature Christian, sighed, "I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate." Romans 7:15, RSV.

2. God does not reject us because of this. In the same passage Paul went on to say to all who accidentally fall while seeking to follow God, "There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus." Romans 8:1. God knows the choice of your heart and accepts you as His child, even now.

3. We can overcome and do better. 2 Corinthians 3:18 promises that as we look to Jesus we will be changed into His likeness. We should *study, talk, and think about Jesus* and His ways, and in so doing we'll come to reach our ideals more and more perfectly.

HOW TO CHANGE A LITTLE BROTHER

I'm a girl, 14, and my brother is 10, and I stay with him when my parents are gone, and he'll call them and get me into loads of trouble. They believe everything he says and don't believe my story. He makes up stories, and they won't listen to my side.

You can't change your folks overnight, or your brother either; so, if we're going to get anywhere soon, how about changing you?

Your brother really gets on your nerves. Right? Sometimes you can hardly stand him. Right?

Then is it any wonder that sometimes he can't stand you?

Here comes the medicine. Unlike most pills, these are bitter on the outside but 100 percent sugar inside.

How long is it, I wonder, since you played catch with him?

Or helped him with his homework—cheerfully?

Or talked football with him—intelligently?

Or held the bolts on his bike while he tightened them?

Or read him a story?

The impossible may take a little while. But with God's help (ask Him!), you could change yourself so much that it wouldn't be long till your little tattler would be telling different tales on the phone!

INTERRACIAL MARRIAGES

Recently, as times are changing, there has been a sudden change of attitude toward interracial dating and marriage. My parents say it is wrong and that I must never date a boy of a different race. I was wondering if the Bible mentions anything on the subject.

The Bible says nothing about it directly. Some people cite 2 Corinthians 6:14 as applying to interracial marriages ("Be ye not unequally yoked together"), but in doing so they omit the following words, "with unbelievers." This passage does not warn against interracial but against interfaith marriages.

In some countries I understand that mixed white and black marriages are so common as to occasion no comment. In the United States today, however, it is different. Black-White couples are likely to find themselves ostracized by many people. And what about their children, and the way people will treat them because of their mixed characteristics and parentage?

Successful marriage requires planning as well as loving, and serious young people size up their partners to see if they're really meant for each other as to health, intelligence, personality, religion, goals, appearance, job interests, hobbies, in-laws, cultural backgrounds, and so forth.

Choosing a life partner of a compatible race demonstrates the same good sense (and certainly no more "bigotry") that choosing one whose personality, religion, and vocation are compatible with your own. □