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### Questions Youth Are Asking Today

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# QUESTIONS YOUTH ARE ASKING TODAY



Answered by Mervyn Maxwell

## OUT OF HER MIND?

A friend of mine married a divorced man thirteen years ago and has had three children by him. Recently she has become a Christian, and the minister who gives her private Bible lessons has nearly convinced her that according to Matthew 5:32 she is living in adultery and should leave both her husband and her children. Is she right or is she having a mental problem?

Vows are not to be taken lightly (Ecclesiastes 5:4, 5), and two wrongs don't make a right. Your friend has sworn before God to love her present husband, an obligation immensely increased by the arrival of her children. Conversion to Christ should make her a better wife and mother, not a worse one. She should confess her sins, accept God's forgiveness (1 John 1:9), and *stay married*.

Be careful here, but if the minister is advising her to leave her children as well as her husband, it could be that he has designs on her. It is possible that this case may have less to do with her mentality than with his morality.

## CRAZILY HAPPY

I enjoy your magazine very much. Pastor Boney wrote a nice testimony about how he gave up drugs. I want to tell you mine. Up to about five months ago I was getting loaded. I thought it was all life had to offer. My mother and I didn't get along. I moved to another town to live with my older brother. I got blind drunk or contact high every chance I could. Then a group of my schoolmates and I went to a meeting. People started singing and being really happy. Soon I was going crazy with happiness. Tears started coming out of my eyes and I nearly squeezed the arm off the girl sit-

ting beside me. After the meeting we got loaded again! But soon it went away. Ever since then I have been filled with God's Spirit. My home is much more happy. People stop me on the street to ask me why I am so happy. How come the Lord is so good to me?

This is great. It's wonderful. Now be sure you keep up with your Bible reading. It's in the Bible that God's Spirit testifies about Christ and tells you how He wants you to live. John 14:17, 26; Psalm 119:9, 11, 105; et cetera.

On our campus at Andrews, where I teach, hundreds of youth enjoyed a terrific revival last year, just as you have done. They followed it up with lots of witnessing and Bible study. It's marvelous to see what's happening this current school year. The changes in their lives are making them really sound and consistent Christians as well as happy ones, and they say this is because they are studying their Bibles together so hard—as well as singing and praying, which are important too.

## PRAYERS FOR THE DEAD?

I do enjoy the "Signs." It's an interesting magazine. Now please tell me if it helps to pray for a person's soul after he has died. My sister died of cancer about a year ago. She suffered terribly, but the hospital personnel kept telling her they believed they could cure her, even when she was dying. Although she believed in God and Jesus Christ, she was not a very religious person, and I am almost sure she did not ask God's forgiveness for her sins as she would have done if the hospital attendants had told her the truth about her condition. Now I pray all the time that God will forgive her sins; a preacher, however, has told me it's

too late for my prayers to do any good. Please tell me whether I am right or wrong.

The Bible says, "Though Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it [the land], as I live, saith the Lord God, they shall deliver neither son nor daughter." Ezekiel 14:20.

Our readiness for eternal life does not depend on some single act of repentance but on a basic attitude of mind. We are "safe to save" when we love God sincerely, are eager to follow Him wherever He leads us, and are sincerely sorry whenever we do wrong. Matthew 22:34-40; John 8:31; 2 Corinthians 7:7-12.

Although you do not know whether or not your sister offered a prayer of repentance before she died, God knows; and He also knows whether, with or without such a prayer, her life deep down was one of love and trust and repentance—as He alone can see it. He is a merciful God and He died to save her, so you can trustingly leave her case in His hands knowing that He will most certainly be fair and loving in His decision concerning her.

## UNPARDONABLE SIN?

I believe I have committed the unpardonable sin. I heard a preacher on TV tell the people to give their lives to Christ. I felt a horrible sense of guilt and in my fear asked God to help me. I experienced an illumination, but like a brute beast I didn't have the common sense to walk away from what I was doing. That night I rejected the only One who could have helped me. God struck me down. I saw how filthy I looked in His eyes. He stripped me bare until I was completely helpless. Does this mean there is no more hope for me? I tried to commit my way to Jesus, believing He would show mercy, but the feeling of doom always gets the better of me. Please help me. I won't confide in anyone else.

The Lord is "good, and ready to forgive; and plenteous in mercy unto all" who "call upon" Him. Psalm 86:5.

"If we confess our sins," the Bible

says, "He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." 1 John 1:9. Jesus says, "Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out." John 6:37.

If you have come to Christ, He has *not* cast you out. If you have confessed your sins, He *has* forgiven you.

Rejoicing in God's goodness, do whatever you can to make things right with people you have harmed (Ezekiel 33:15), and don't be misled by how you *feel*. Depend instead on what God promises.

"If you give yourself to Him, and accept Him as your Saviour, then, sinful as your life may have been, for His sake you are accounted righteous. Christ's character stands in place of your character and you are accepted before God *just as if you had not sinned.*"—*Steps to Christ*, page 62.

#### HOW TO KEEP FRIENDS

**It's fun writing to people you don't know. Like you, for instance! . . . If I tell a secret to the friends I run around with, they tell everybody what I said. Sometimes they even tell me things about people that aren't true in order to get me to say something, and then they go and tell what I said and I lose two or three friends at a time from not keeping my mouth closed. My problem is how to get friends and how to keep them.**

Keeping your mouth shut is part of your answer, but only part of it.

Keep it closed when you are inclined to be unkind—but open it wide when you have a chance to be nice.

When you notice someone in your room is wearing interesting clothes, or has set her hair becomingly, or has answered a difficult question, or has been kind to some little kid (et cetera), give the person a little compliment and tell someone else what you think. Don't be gushy or phony! Be short, simple, and sincere.

Paying compliments makes a person feel good about you; and using your mouth to express sincere appreciation helps you *not* to use it to make enemies.

#### NOBODY NEEDS ME

**Thank you for answering my last letter. My problem this time is that I can't get over the feeling that nobody needs me. I have been praying for God to give me enough courage to do away with myself; and I think He's doing it. Then I won't be a nuisance to anyone anymore.**

Let me tell you in the name of the Lord Jesus that God will not for one minute answer your prayer to help you do away with yourself! Jesus says in John 10:10, "I am come that they might have *life*, and that they might have it more abundantly." Psalm 33:18, 19: "Behold, the eye of the Lord is upon them that fear Him, upon them that hope in His mercy; to deliver their soul from death." 1 John 5:12 says, "He that hath the Son hath *life.*"

God wants you to live. It is Satan who tells you that no one needs you.

The world is filled with sinners who live for self and evil. There are so few who know the love of Jesus. God needs everyone He can find to do good to others.

People all around need you. If you will give yourself to God and begin now to do little deeds of kindness and thoughtfulness to others, there will begin to glow in your heart the joy that always comes from a life of service.

#### ACCEPTANCE FOR GLAD SINNERS?

**I think homosexuality is all right. But even if it isn't, straight people—anyway, straight Christians—shouldn't oppose it. The Bible says, "Jesus receives sinners." If you think glad people are sinners, then you too should accept us the way we are.**

Jesus receives sinners, all right. Luke 15:2. But He receives them *to change them.* 2 Corinthians 5:17: "If a man is in Christ he becomes a new person altogether—the past is finished and gone, everything has become fresh and new." Phillips.

You'll admit that you aren't living with only one lover in a bond of perpetual loyalty; you have a new partner every time. You will not deny that at the least you are "promiscuous."

Jesus was understanding and compassionate to the adulterous woman in John 8. But as soon as He was sure she recognized in Him a friend, He proceeded to say to her, "Go—and sin no more."

Christ, the friend of "glad" sinners, offers you a new life and with transforming power at His command bids you too, "Go, and sin no more."

#### SHOULD I GET A DIVORCE?

**I read your column each month, and often it helps me. I have been married five years and have two children. My husband, who does not share my Christian convictions, never takes the lead in our family affairs as a husband should. In fact, we can never talk anything over together, and when he is home I get terribly uptight. We have been separated now for about a year, and my nerves are calming down. I have been advised by ministers, priests, and marriage counselors to get a divorce—but my husband doesn't want one and says he loves me. I am confused.**

If your husband's only fault is that he wants you to be the "man" of the house, divorce may prove worse medicine than the disease.

One result I foresee is an ever deepening bitterness on your part as year after year you try to convince your growing children that their papa was a malignant heel. For that matter, any divorcée is tempted to teach her children to hate their dad—only to discover too late that they have learned to hate her too. Enlightened love is the only solution to any of life's problems.

I recommend that you (a) clarify your husband's defects as precisely as possible in your own mind, (b) with all your intelligence decide how to adjust to them, and (c) claim with living faith Christ's promises to help you. Here are two: "Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest." Matthew 11:28. "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." John 14:27.