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### Look At It This Way: Questions Youth Are Asking Today

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# Look at It This Way

## Questions Youth Are Asking Today

Mervyn Maxwell

### ECUMENICAL MARRIAGE?

I have a problem that has bothered me for the past year and a half. My boyfriend is a Lutheran, and I am a Seventh-day Adventist. He is 22 and I am 21, and we're planning to get married in about a year. The trouble is that he says he won't ever become a Sabbath keeper; and I know, even though I'm far from being a perfect Adventist, that I could never become a Lutheran. I have previously dated several Adventist boys, but this is the first time I've really been in love. Life couldn't be any more beautiful. But I'm worried about what this could do to our children, when we have any. I've prayed a lot for guidance. My friend and I will both be waiting for your reply. [North Dakota]

There are several reasons that may explain why your present romance seems unusually pleasant. You are older than when you were in high school and hence more truly "marriageable"; and besides, you appear to have met a boy with "principle," who earns your respect in an intriguing, challenging way. But a third possible reason ought to worry you. The Bible says, "Stolen waters are sweet." Proverbs 9:17.

I do not know either of you, but I will assume you are both Christians. Your boyfriend's interpretation of Christianity is, however, very different from yours; and the fact that he intends to stick with his beliefs and you intend to stay with yours bodes only trouble for the future—for both of you. You are worried about which way you will bring up your children. It is your good sense that makes you worry about this.

God has answered your prayers even before you asked Him. He

said nearly 2,000 years ago, "Be ye not unequally yoked together." And Paul made it clear that the inequality was a matter of *belief*. Don't marry someone with a different belief. See 2 Corinthians 6:14.

You both want to do the right thing. May I encourage you to do it?

If I were you, I would tell your friend that I love him dearly and want him badly, but that I am breaking off the engagement at once. Such a sweet ultimatum might lead him to reconsider your religion, and if so, fine. Or it might leave both of you free to find the "other person" God has in mind for you. Either way, He will stand by your side.

### HOW CAN I GET A BOOK?

I am trying to secure a personal copy of that wonderful book, "Your Bible and You." My local bookstore doesn't stock it. Can you tell me where I could write for it? [Alberta]

Of course! Drop a line to the folk who are responsible for *Signs of the Times*: Pacific Press Publishing Association, Mountain View, California 94040. Or, if you'd rather write a bookstore close to your home, try the Adventist Book Center at 201 16th Avenue, NE, Calgary 61, Alberta.

### WHY IS IT EASIER FOR SOME PEOPLE?

It seems so much easier for some people to be good Christians than it does for others. Why is this so? Does God help some people more than He does others? [Michigan]

Since the Bible says that God "shows no partiality" (Acts 10:34, RSV), you can be quite sure He is willing to help everyone alike. So

let us look at other possible explanations.

(1) People who grow up in Christian homes can develop good habits of prayer, faith, forgiving, and being kind, and *avoid* developing bad habits of swearing, fighting back, and using drugs. This unquestionably makes it easier for them to be Christians.

(2) Some Christians who actually have just as many problems as anyone else, *seem* to have fewer, because they attend to them through earnest prayer and intense Bible study when alone. Then when they are in public they have full control of themselves.

(3) Some Christians make it a point never to read, watch, or think about anything that would put evil thoughts into their minds. In this way they *avoid* many temptations.

(4) Some other people, born with naturally likable personalities, seem to be good Christians when really they are nothing more than courteous pagans. They aren't letting God help them at all.

### HOW CAN I BECOME A CHRISTIAN?

I am not a member of your church, but I sometimes attend Adventist services and I enjoy "Signs of the Times." I want to be a Christian, but I don't know how to give my heart to Christ. Can you help me find Him? [Michigan]

You can find Him more easily than you think, for He is already close to you. The Bible says in one place, "He is not far from each one of us." Acts 17:27, RSV. In another place it says, "The goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance" (Romans 2:4), which means that your very desire to repent is evidence that God is with you!

To give yourself to Him, just bow your head and say something simple and sincere like this: "Jesus, I want to belong to You. I know I am not the kind of person I should be, and I need You to forgive me and to help me live the way I should. I give You all there is of me, including my hopes and plans for the future. Please take me and use me as entirely Yours."

Believe as you say this that He is answering your request even while you pray. After all, Jesus has invited you to come to Him: "Come to me," "learn from me," "I will give you rest." Matthew 11:28, 29, RSV.

Then help Jesus answer your prayer. Read your Bible daily to find out better what a Christlike life is supposed to be; and pray every day—several times a day is better—for Him to help you.

Your question may have been answered in Mervyn Maxwell's latest book, "Look at It This Way." Why not order a copy today? Just fill out the coupon below. For each copy enclose \$1.00 (which includes postage, handling, and sales tax) and mail to:

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#### PRAYING FOR THE HOLY SPIRIT

Would you please explain how I can obtain the Holy Spirit. I am struggling to receive it. [Nigeria]

Jesus told us how to receive the Holy Spirit. He said, "If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who *ask him?*" Luke 11:13, RSV.

So there! It isn't hard. All you need to do is *ask*.

But you say you have asked, yet have not received. In Mark 11:24 RSV Jesus said, "What ever you ask in prayer, *believe that you receive it*, and you will."

Your problem may be that you are expecting something in particular to take place in order to prove that the Holy Spirit has arrived. You may even be hoping to "talk in tongues." But the Bible nowhere says that everyone who receives the Spirit talks in tongues. Ordinarily the Spirit comes quietly, bringing conviction of sin (John 16:7-11) and joy, peace, and self-control. Galatians 2:20.

You have asked God for His Spirit. As you read this letter, believe that God keeps His promise. Then go in peace! God *has* come to you. You *have* received the Spirit.

#### SATAN IN HEAVEN?

In the December issue you answered a question for a 13-year-old. Now I've got some questions based on your answer. I would like to know (1) how it is possible for Satan to stand before God and ask permission to tempt Job, and (2) how an "evil angel" can come before God and ask permission to tell lies to King Ahab—if both Satan

and his evil angels were supposedly put out of heaven? [California]

The same Bible that tells us, in Revelation 12, that Satan and his angels were at one time "cast out of heaven," also tells us, in the first two chapters of the book of Job, that Satan came to appear before God in the days when that good man, Job, was alive.

What conclusion can we draw? Only this, that although Satan and his angels were at a certain time forbidden to have permanent residence any longer in heaven, they were not forbidden to visit there from time to time.

#### MORE JOY THAN YOU SAID

I know your space is limited when you answer questions, but I think there is so much more joy in being a Christian than you indicated to one of your questioners once, that I just must add to what you said. The "more abundant" life of John 10:10 includes—

- (1) Friendship with the King of all the earth and sky.
- (2) Partnership financially with One who will supply all your needs.
- (3) Victory over every habit that lessens physical or spiritual health.
- (4) Time for everything you need to do for yourself and for others.
- (5) The thrill of seeing the Holy Spirit work through you to save others.
- (6) The privilege of taking all our problems to Him, large or small.
- (7) The joy of knowing that eternal life is a GIFT from God (Romans 6:23) and that, by faith, you can possess it even NOW (John 6:54).

[Washington]