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Look At It This Way: Questions Youth Are Asking Today

C. Mervyn Maxwell
Andrews University

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Recommended Citation

Maxwell, C. Mervyn, "Look At It This Way: Questions Youth Are Asking Today" (1973). *Faculty Publications*. 3932.

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Look at It This Way

Questions Youth Are Asking Today

Answered by Mervyn Maxwell

HOW TO GET "GROOVY"

My science teacher is real groovy. Almost everyone thinks he's great. What I like best about him is that he never loses his cool, no matter what. Take me, though. I seem to be mad all the time. Of course sometimes I think they need what I tell them, but other times I'm terribly embarrassed afterwards. How can I be more like Mr. ___?

1. Make up your mind that there are to be *no exceptions*, that nobody needs your lip. If you get this clear once and for all, it will be much easier to decide what not to say when someone bothers you.

2. Make it a habit to think of all other people as your friends. This will soon change your way of talking to them, and soon many of them will actually become your friends. Then they won't irritate you so much.

3. Never let yourself think up angry speeches you'd like to deliver to so-and-so. When we blurt out "things we'd never think of saying," usually it's because we *did* think about saying them.

4. Tone up your nerves with (a) more sleep and (b) better food. It's my guess you live on a lot of pop

and candy. So much sugar without good food to go with it drains the vitamin B out of your system. Vitamin B is vital to good nerves.

5. In the morning when you get up, at night when you go to bed, and several times during the day ask God to help you. Believe He will help you; then when He reminds you to "cool it," accept His help. Read in your Bible Philip-
pians 4:13.

MAY I COMMIT SUICIDE?

You have written to me before, and your answers have been a help. But I still feel useless and depressed. The only thing that keeps me going is my work. Do you think God would understand if I committed suicide?

I cannot speak for God, but I am quite sure that your parents wouldn't understand. They love you and want you to live.

And a lot of other people need you. There are lonely people who need you for a friend, little kids in your neighborhood whom you could help with their homework, and so on.

You say that your work keeps you going. To be sure it does, because it takes you away from your thinking about yourself and also gives you a sense of being useful. If you would make an effort, you could find many other ways to be useful, and thus many more things to keep you going.

By the way, I believe you wrote me a very similar letter two years ago. Praise God, you're still alive. And I believe you will still be alive—helping people and filling a useful place in society—another two years from now.

SEX AND SIGNS OF THE TIMES

Cancel our subscription! As parents we cannot tolerate your paper in our home any longer. . . . In a

recent issue you referred to sexual intercourse as the "Real Thing," but nowhere did you state that it had to be practiced only within marriage. For you, quite obviously, it is all right to practice it with anybody. . . . We are sick over the wholesale decline of Christian morals in "Signs of the Times."

I do think it is all right to practice the Real Thing with anybody; with anybody, that is, to whom you are properly married.

Sex was created by God when He made our first human parents as "one flesh." Jesus commented on the "one flesh" unity of true marriage with the well-known words, "What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder." Matthew 19:5, 6.

The "Real Thing" can be the *real* thing only when it is an experience in total commitment such as God had in mind when He created it; and it can be this only when practiced between two persons who have sealed a permanent commitment through marriage and are prepared to bring up any children who may be the result.

Anything else is a substitute.

CAN THE GIRL BE THE OLDER ONE?

My problem is not a large one, but I would like your advice. There's a boy I like, and I have learned that he likes me. But I've also found out that he's younger than I am. He acts my age and is more mature than other boys his age. It seems to me that if two people really like each other, it shouldn't matter which one is the older, provided it's within reason.

During their teen years girls ordinarily mature more rapidly than boys, with the result that girls of a given age are usually more mature than boys of the same age.

But not everyone matures at the same rate. A girl may find that she

DO YOU HAVE A QUESTION?

Would you like to ask Mervyn Maxwell to help you find an answer? If so, send your question to:

Mervyn Maxwell
"Signs of the Times"
1350 Villa Street
Mountain View, California 94040

It is not possible to answer all letters in the "Signs"; and publishing procedures being what they are, answers published in this column may not appear until several months after you send in your question. If you want to be sure of receiving an answer to your particular question, be certain to give your address when writing.

likes a boy who has matured somewhat more rapidly than other boys. This may be your case right now.

You're smart to be cautious about dating. Fully half of all teen-age marriages end in divorce; and you know what leads to marriages—going steady. If you want to be as safe as possible from the mess of a future broken home, go easy on going steady in your teens. You're wise to think seriously before getting serious with any boy, older or younger than yourself.

HIGH PRICES AND CHRISTIAN ETHICS

As an office manager I am deeply concerned over the exorbitant finance rates my department has to charge in order to survive. I know full well that people can get money a lot cheaper elsewhere. This is a very small example of what is going on in today's business world. How can a person in business have Christian ethics?

I am not sure that I exactly understand your situation, from the limited information you have given in your short letter. So I shall avoid generalizations and ask you a few questions.

1. Are you providing a necessary service, and are the prices that you charge essential in order for you to continue to provide this service? If the answer to both of these questions is Yes, then it is right for you to go on charging high prices, for otherwise you would have to close your business, and this would de-

prive people of a necessary service.

2. Are people required to come to you, or are they free to go to a cheaper place of business? If they are coming to you of their own free will, it is probably because they feel your kind of service is worth the extra cost.

3. Or does your firm trap people into exorbitant prices through trick advertising? If so, you'd better either help your customers get out of the trap by fully explaining your charges before you let them sign a contract—or get out of the trap yourself and find another job. In either case, you should present your concern frankly and earnestly to your employer first.

HAS GOD FORGIVEN ME?

Does God the Father forgive all? I am in prison for a crime I committed (forced rape). I know it was wrong, and I have asked God to forgive me, but I don't know if He really has. Every night all I do is think of what I did and ask myself Why? Can you tell me what to do? Please write me personally. Thank you.

The Bible says plainly and emphatically, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." 1 John 1:9.

So God the Father has promised to forgive every sin we confess—and since you have confessed your sin, the next thing for you to do is to believe that He has done so, and rejoice in His love.

Something else you can do is to try to think of women as persons of dignity whom God created to be loved and respected, rather than merely as objects on whom to satisfy sex urges. Ask God to help you find a whole new attitude toward life and people, and then by His grace you need never commit any crime again.

CHRISTIANITY OR "CHURCHIANITY"?

There is nothing more important to me than saving lost souls. I try to reach lost friends and relatives by letters and prayers. But I see no necessity to go to any church. I listen to religious radio broadcasts and communicate with various Christians by mail. I feel no need of further tutoring from human beings. I have asked God for insight, and He has given it to me. We who are born again teach not churchianity but Christianity.

I have always thought that going to church—not only to learn but also to encourage others and to worship God with them—was a part of Christianity. The very first time the word "Christians" is used in the Bible, it is used to describe the "church" of believers who "assembled" together in the city of Antioch. Acts 11:26.

Would you concede that the author of the Book of Hebrews (in the Bible) was born again? He advised us against "forsaking the assembling of ourselves together." Hebrews 10:25.

D. TARK

