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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



D. TANK

IS PRAYER "IDLE WORDS"?

The Bible says that God knows everything. It also says that we shouldn't use "idle words." Matthew 12:36. Then how can it be right to pray? Telling God things He already knows has to be about the most useless thing you can think of. Prayer must be "idle words." I'm fourteen.

You've got a point. If prayer were simply telling God things, then it would be a waste of time.

When I pray, I tell God whatever is on my mind—either about things that have happened or about things that are going to happen, or about things that I want. I don't do this in order to inform God—because, as you say, He knows everything in advance. I have other reasons:

1. So I can add that I am sorry

about things I have done that were wrong.

2. To tell Him I'm happy about nice things He has done.

3. To express my faith in Him.

4. To get His reaction, so I can find out how He feels about something I want, or have done. If you wait a moment after you pray about something, you can usually tell whether God is pleased or not.

To be sure, God does know everything; but we still need to pray, in order to have things happen to us. We need to say, "I'm sorry," "Thank You," "I believe You, God," and "Is what I want to do OK with You?"

IS IT WRONG TO "NECK"?

I have been wondering—Is it wrong to neck with a boy you really do like? I know it is a sin to have intercourse before marriage, and I will be a virgin bride. But what about desires? Is it a sin to let loose those desires but not go all the way?

Fact No. 1. The more you touch a person you like, the more you want to touch him. This is just the nature of "making love." Necking doesn't have to lead to intercourse, but it very often does after a while.

You talk about "letting loose" your desires. Actually you have two desires. One (which is sinful) is to daydream about sex with a person you are not married to, and the other (which is very commendable) is to be a virgin bride. If you want the second one—and I think you want it very much—then daydream about that instead. Because, it's fact No. 2 that the more you think about something, the more you want it.

AM I TAKING GOD'S NAME IN VAIN?

I know that using God's name in swearing and cursing is a sin, and I haven't done this for about three years. But what about using God's name a lot when praying? Could that be wrong too? Sometimes I say the word "God" two or three times just because I like the sound of it. Or maybe you should start at the bottom and tell me what you think the third commandment really means.

A "Christian" is a person who has taken the name of Christ. He is a Christ-ian, and he was baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

If a Christian lives carelessly, then by his life he shows that he is every day taking God's name in vain.

This is the most important meaning of the third commandment.

But any trivial use of God's name

ERIC KREVE



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 94042



D. TARK

is also wrong. God is the great Creator, the One who dwells in light unapproachable, and in whose presence even the angels veil their faces. The fact that He who lives

in the high and holy place loves us enough to dwell also with us (Isaiah 57:15) does not make Him any the less a Very Important Person. To make mention of Him in a light, joking way reveals that we do not really respect His greatness.

Using His name frequently in prayer may or may not be sin, depending on our reason for doing so. It may be mindless repetition. Or it may be the result of deep earnestness. See Daniel 9 for a sincere Bible prayer in which the name of God is used often.

GIRL FRIENDS KEEP SAYING, NO

I am a Baptist and I enjoy reading your column in "Signs of the Times." My problem is that I have had many love affairs—too many. At first, things run smoothly; then at the last minute my girls say, No. I am now 29 and would like to get married soon. Can you help me? [Burma]

I expect you are too anxious. You are so concerned to get married that you hurry your girl friends along too quickly without giving them time to think. Without meaning to be, you are probably also selfish. You think more about what mar-

riage will do for you than for your future wife.

Next time, give your girl a longer time—several months' longer time—to get acquainted with you before you ask her to marry you.

The Bible promises guidance. See Proverbs 3:6. Psalm 37:3-7 can help too: "Delight thyself also in the Lord; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart. . . . Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for him."

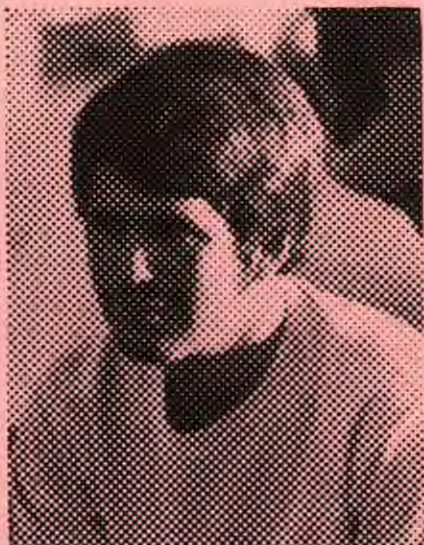
I FEEL ALL HOLLOW INSIDE

I have my serious problem. Religion.

I feel like a giant manikin. Everything is put together perfectly on the outside, but I'm hollow inside. Nothing there. I read the Bible a lot. I look up in a commentary what I don't understand. I believe Jesus is coming soon. But still, no dice. Why? I want to be filled. I want to be able to jump with joy because I know God and Jesus are with me. When kids at school give me a bad time because I don't swear, go to R movies, or read bad magazines, I want to be able to remember that God and Jesus appreciate what I do and will help me. But inside, I'm all dead. At night I cry for God to get this burden off me. I'm thirteen.

One simple thing will make the difference. Take the Bible promise you most wish applied to you, put your finger on it, read it out loud, and say as bravely as you can, "I believe it." Then say, "I believe it" again and again until you can fairly shout it.

Jesus said, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." Then He is with you. He



ERIC KREYE

really is. He is with *you*—whether you feel Him there or not.

And as to jumping for joy—why, do it! That's right! Luke 6:22, 23 says that when people persecute you for Christ's sake (as some of the kids are doing) you *should* "leap for joy."

You may want to wait until no one else is at home to hear you. Then jump up in the air and say, "Praise the Lord!" Do it again until you really believe that, through Jesus, your reward is indeed great in heaven.

I have done this a number of times myself, when I have thought that people were unkind to me. It worked for me! It will for you too.

*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.