

QUESTION:

You are so opposed to allowing a boy to kiss a girl. How is a girl ever going to keep a boy interested in her if she continually holds him off?

ANSWER:

Apparently, you will be surprised to know that I am not opposed to boys kissing girls. I oppose the misuse of this demonstration of deep affection. I do not think that boys should be kissing girls with whom they are no more than just friendly, nor should young people who are committed to each other engage in long periods of intense hugging and kissing.

If your boyfriend objects strenuously to your holding him off, it is time to *send* him off. You had better recognize the fact that you will probably have to defend yourself against the advances of a boyfriend until you marry. Should you forget or overlook this, you might find yourself in serious trouble.

By mention of this, I do not mean to defend the young men for being too aggressive. It is finally the responsibility of the young ladies, however, to see that everything remains under control. Any young friend of yours who will not respect your dignity will not respect you. Let him exploit someone else!

We invite your questions for helpful counseling through this column. Should you prefer a personal answer by letter, this service is also offered. Write to: Aim, Box 158, Stanberry, Missouri 64489.

Youth Questions
answered by
Ray L. Straub



*Tell
Me,
Please*

QUESTION:

I'm not particularly fond of dancing and going to movies, and my parents and church are strictly opposed. But, my boyfriend insists that if we don't go to these places, there is nothing to do on a date and he gets disgusted. What is wrong with giving in to him once in a while?

ANSWER:

The wrong person is giving in on this issue. You, your parents and your church deserve your boyfriend's respect in this regard. If he cannot understand the feelings of all of you now

enough to respect them, he will probably make little attempt to do so later. When you are right, do not give in so easily. If your boyfriend will not give in to you, your parents, or your church, find someone who will.

Obviously, when you grant success to his stubbornness, you pay a very high price for little but future heartache in return. You give up good training, the counsel of wise parents, and the strength of your church's influence over both of you. In return you receive but a few hours of shallow pleasure with someone whose attitude and actions promise only hours of agony and abuse in the days to come. It is good to be opened-minded and soft-hearted. I like to see people who can give in once in awhile. There are times when this attitude is of real value. Here, however, you are not being virtuous; you're being too weak. Flex your spiritual muscle a bit and let your boyfriend know that you value your religion and your training, and that if he wishes to consider you precious, he must value them, too.

QUESTION:

My problem is a strange one. This girl I go with is very aggressive. I actually have to resist her. What should I do?

ANSWER:

You need to insure yourself against her! The insurance comes in the form of space between you; the more space there is between the two of you, the

better the insurance.

Relax. Your problem is hardly new or strange, and you should not be so naive. Find yourself a young lady with whom you can have a pleasant time, instead of wasting so much energy fighting both your girl friend and yourself.

QUESTION:

It seems to me that my parents show favoritism to my younger brother. He has a way of getting to them that they are not aware of. I don't think this is fair, do you?

ANSWER:

If you observe correctly, I agree that it is not fair. I am sure your parents would agree with us, also. Discuss this situation with them and tell them your feelings. You need a better understanding with them on this matter. Be careful not to harbor these kind of sentiments, because they can be extremely harmful.

I assure you that if one of my own children had feelings such as you have, I would want him to speak to me about it. It is a serious mistake for a parent to prefer one of their children above the other. Most parents will do their best to correct this and will try harder to avoid its happening again.

It is not at all unusual for someone in a family to feel the way you do once in awhile, and there is often basis for it. The quicker it is cleared up, however, the less damage can be caused by it.

QUESTION:

I have been dating a girl whose parents resent our seeing each other just because of my religion. I am a member of the Church of God, the same as you. This girl is interested in me and my beliefs, but her parents give both of us a bad time because of her interest. We have to meet secretly. We discuss our religion a lot, and our relationship is respectable. Do you think we should give in to her parents and break it off?

ANSWER:

You have a *real* problem here. Any advice I have to give would be offered on the basis of your ages and maturity. If religion is in fact the real cause for parental objection, the parents should feel the obligation to consider the value of your beliefs with their daughter and you. While they are shoving this responsibility aside, I tend to think the young lady would still have the right to conscientiously investigate your beliefs. Personally, I do not consider it a parent's right to close a daughter's mind against her will in this matter of investigating a religion, if this daughter is capable of making her own decision responsibly. She has a right to pursue truth and to choose her own religion. She has, in fact, that God-given responsibility.

Under the circumstances, you would do well to safeguard against getting too emotionally involved with each other. The

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day is coming when she has to choose between you and her parents due to this religious conflict. This practically assures some grief in itself. It is much easier to investigate a religion, even though under a parent's scorn, than it is to forsake a home to accept strange belief. Be as helpful as you can, but brace yourselves emotionally.

These situations can be most complicated! See your pastor on this matter and invite his guidance. If this is not practical, write to me personally, and I'll try to offer what help I can.

QUESTION:

I would like to invite my date to our church, but it would be most embarrassing! Our services are run so poorly, and such unpredictable things happen that he would either be shocked or

amused, or both. Is there anything that can be done about this?

ANSWER:

I hope there is. If you have not already done so, discuss this matter with your parents. There may be some good reason why the services are being carried on as they are.

If you cannot get enough satisfaction from your parents, talk to your pastor or the officer in charge of arranging and conducting your church services. Don't go intending to protest, but approach them with the desire to seek their help.

Often there is good reason for the use of certain procedures in church. You should know them.

When your friend accepts the invitation to attend church with you, go over the order of service with him beforehand, giving explanations as to why the various activities are a part of your worship. He will find the services more interesting and meaningful.

You may even have suggestions to offer your pastor on how the services may be improved. Often leaders are unaware of certain faults that show up in the course of a church service. He will welcome your concern, and you may be quite surprised to see your good ideas readily adopted.

QUESTION:

Why do so many people complain about the church and her

ministers? I hear so much of it, and it is discouraging.

ANSWER:

I really cannot tell you why people complain as they do. It may be because the very high ideals and standards that the church and ministers forward cause feelings of guilt. People with these feelings of guilt are relieved to find mistakes in those whom they blame for causing this guilt. It is easy to complain, but it is terribly difficult to overcome the temptation to do so.

Ministers are generally accustomed to hearing complaints without having ill feelings arise. Many of these complaints are offered sincerely. At times they bring useful suggestions, and at other times they merely reflect a lack of information that would otherwise enable them to understand. Pertinent explanations often offer much insight and understanding.

Others feel that after the minister has his say-so, they should have theirs. I agree with them and am willing to listen to good reasoning.

The best cure for complainers is to have someone around who is cheerful. Few people intend to hurt anyone through their complaining. Give them the benefit of any doubts about them you may have and let the warmth of your forgiving and cheerful attitudes melt their frost.

er of Christ within, which is peace, joy, love, health and supply. Release all thoughts of the past that trouble you, all failures, all frustrations, all tensions and begin each new day by acknowledging the presence of Christ within.

David in speaking of the power and majesty of God in Psalm 95:6, 7 says: "O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the Lord our maker. For he is our God; and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand, Today if ye will hear his voice."

What a wonderful happy thought—"Today if ye will hear his voice!" Not tomorrow, because tomorrow all too soon becomes today, and today becomes yesterday beyond recall. It is today, this very day, this very hour and minute, that happiness begins if we will heed the call of God.

'Tis Being and Doing

There is no secret to today's happiness. Jesus gave the perfect plan in Luke 17:21, "... Behold the kingdom of God is within you." Paul added this thought to today's happiness—"Christ in you, the hope of glory." The embodiments of this kingdom are found in Gal. 5:22, 23: "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance..." Life must be happy if we are in such

a glorious state, because there is no law against the goodness of God. Why? Because these are attributes of God. To be happy, one must embody the good contained in these godly attributes, and practice them to perfection. It does no earthly good to know something that will make you happy, and then never use it. "'Tis being and doing and having that make All the pleasures and pains of which mankind partake; To be what God pleases, to do a man's best, And to have a good heart, is the way to be blest" (Byron).

Remember the little grace you learned as a child—"God is great, God is good."? Meditate upon this thought. Grasp the significance of the words; thrill to the power in that simple statement—"God is great." Can't you begin to sense the joy of knowing such a great God? This is a happy statement, designed to teach us the greatness and goodness of God and His providence for His children. We can be happy because God cares what happens to our lives.

Make Happiness a Habit

Make happiness a habit. Begin each new day in the realization that God has something good in store for you and that you are determined not to let it pass by and wait for another opportunity tomorrow.

Begin the day by freeing your mind of any limited belief con-

cerning your capabilities, and your right to happiness. Negation neutralizes your good, so think powerful, positive thoughts. Remember that you are serving a powerful God. Let your mind and heart be quickened with the realization that you are a child of God, fearless and free.

Instead of thinking of hap-

Tell Me, Please

QUESTION:

You are a pastor of a church. Tell me honestly, do you think a person needs to attend church "every" week?

ANSWER:

I *honestly* do! What else do you plan to do on Sabbath? This is a holy day. Observing it as such is a *moral* issue. If you are physically able to be in church on the Sabbath, that is precisely where you belong!

I am aware that you are doing much better than a lot of other people even when you attend less than each week. Nonetheless, by missing any service without good reason you are

pinness in terms of the future, begin the happiness habit today. A life in Christ is meant to be a joyous and rewarding life today, and it will be, if it is lived in the knowledge that the kingdom of God is within your very being, and that kingdom is a happy kingdom because Christ sits on the throne of your heart.

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making a compromise, and that is costly. Remember the proverb: "A long journey begins with the first step." An unexcusable absence once in a great while may seem innocent, but the direction that this careless decision takes you can bring tragic harm. You need to quit looking at others around you for your religious standards and begin looking into God's Word and then heavenward for your answers.

Absenteeism from church services is a harmfully serious problem. Don't make it worse. Get on the other side and fight it!

Tell Me, Please

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QUESTION:

When I was younger, I became involved with a man I thought I loved deeply. In a very short time, however, we broke up, leaving me so emotionally upset I didn't care what happened. Thanks to the grace of God and prayers of others, I found my way back to God. I feel I've been forgiven. My life is now more complete with the Spirit and love of God than it has ever been.

I am engaged to marry the most wonderful person. We both have high standards, and I'm sure he thinks I'm perfect. Should I tell him before we marry that I am not as pure as he thinks, or should I mention it at all? I don't want to hurt him, but I don't want to deceive him, either.

ANSWER:

Not knowing the extent of your involvement with the first man you mention, it is difficult for me to make any precise suggestion. I would presume that you were either intimate with him, or with someone while you were emotionally upset. Anything less than this hardly assumes the role of a confession. Anything farther would involve marriage or a premarital pregnancy, in which case there

would be no question but what the man you intend to marry should be told.

So, even though it is a bit dangerous, I'll answer on the basis of my presumption.

Some would find your question easy to answer. Unfortunately, I don't. I am not an advocate of the policy that a boy or girl getting married, or even a husband and wife, should "tell all." Any person, in order to retain his full responsibility and identity as an individual in his own right should retain the privilege of keeping some information to himself.

Your letter contains one statement that deserves attention and may help to solve the problem. You state with admirable thoughtfulness, "... I don't want to deceive him." If your withholding this information gives him a wrong idea about something which is of real concern to him, he should be told. It would be less than proper for you to enter marriage with a man while withholding information that might in any way affect the complete and enfolding unity of personalities that a marriage represents.

If you feel guilty about marrying him without telling him, then pro-

ceed to clear the air. Apparently, you have reason to believe it could become an issue. Any disappointment that results before marriage would be much more intense after you establish a home. If it is important to either of you now, it will not become less important in months and years to come, unless it has been discussed.

There should be no reason why revealing this information should cause undue hurt. It may be disappointing, but if both of you are Christians, you have experienced what it is to be forgiven of a sin and feel the love of God in your hearts. Previous misconduct is regrettable, but not unpardonable. With your sins forgiven, you are just as perfect—if not more so, than you ever were. Your fiancé will no doubt reason the same way.

Unless or until you are quite positive that you will be married, there is no reason to tell him. This information is the business of your husband-to-be only.

QUESTION:

I am not the only one who has this problem, but it is a problem nevertheless. I lose my temper too often. Whenever I get into a discussion and someone disagrees with me, I get more and more upset until things almost get out of hand. I can get pretty hot over a lot of other things, too. On the other hand, once I get these things off my chest, I feel better. What can I do to get better control of my temper?

ANSWER:

A great many lines could be offered explaining the nature of patience, or

loss of it. Everyone has a certain level, or threshold, at which he loses self-control. Yours must be pretty low, because you reach boiling point too easily.

Believe it or not, there may be several good reasons why you get angry easily. Generally, this comes about because you have more than your share of frustrations. This is a good reason, but it is not a good excuse! You need to do something about your frustrations, the various experiences in life that seriously bother you.

Lacking space to say very much, I'll suggest two attitudes that will help in finding a remedy for your problem. They are faith, and a discreet sense of humor.

People who are easily frustrated generally lack faith in others. They are resentful, suspicious, pessimistic. They blame others for their own shortcomings and hope that they will be punished. You need to learn to forgive, accept and love people for what they are. Your very faith in God is closely related to the faith you can retain in others.

Learn also to laugh at yourself and with others. A good sense of humor can drive away much dreariness. You don't get angry when you can laugh and spread delight.

Work on trying to control your temper. You are the only one in a position to do much about it, and you can't amount to much until you do. You can raise that low boiling point if you want to. When you lose your temper it is your fault. Don't blame others. You have a job to do, friend. Unless you really work at self-control, it will never get better. Get busy and good luck!

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QUESTION:

Some time ago I began dating a girl who is not a member of our church. I confess that I don't even know how interested in our religion she is because we haven't discussed it much. When we first began dating, we had the understanding that we couldn't become serious due to these differences. It didn't work out that way. Now I can hardly see myself breaking it off. Would you advise that we break up, or are religious differences serious enough to cost so much?

ANSWER:

It depends upon how much both of you think of your religion. The nature of your question indicates that as your association with your girl friend has become more valuable to you, your religion has lost some importance. I gather this from your determination at first to keep from getting serious due to the differences. Now it doesn't seem to matter quite as much.

You have fallen victim to an experience where values changed on you. You have compromised a value you previously recognized to be good. This change is more than likely going to be temporary, because so often when the question of whether or not

to break a relationship is decided by marriage a new appreciation for religion is gained—but too late.

Your situation is a bit like a pearl diver who discovers a valuable pearl at the bottom of the sea but lacks enough air in his lungs to both go down after it and make it back to the surface. He has a choice of either going back for more air to try again at the risk of losing the pearl, or he might be determined to get his hands on the pearl at the risk of losing his life.

These kind of questions must be decided in terms of what they do to shape our future. The best experience for the diver momentarily might be to get his hands on the treasure. In the same way, it may be easier for you to continue your pleasurable association and just ignore the matter of religious differences. But, what about the future? You are having to decide now whether to go deeper at the risk of drowning spiritually, or to come to the surface and think things over just a bit more.

In a church where it is sometimes practically impossible, due to small numbers, for a youth to find a suitable date within the ranks of our church fellowship, it is understandably likely that there will be dating with youths of other faiths. Regard-

less of this circumstance, however, religious differences are still a threatening factor to any marriage. They can be resolved, but this should be done before couples become too involved with each other.

It should also be remembered that it is hardly realistic to think that a couple can continue to date consistently without a growing affection developing between them.

Please remember that a religion that is worth anything is worth some sacrifice. Be prepared to suffer for a good cause. Without sufficient strength to stand up for your belief, you lack necessary ingredients for a good marriage. Get your values re-aligned, and then do what you must.

QUESTION:

I go with a crowd that occasionally attends parties given by other high school kids. I like to go to them, but at times I get to feeling uncomfortable—for a silly reason. At some of these "blasts" they bring some beer. The others think I ought to have some with them, but I haven't yet. They keep asking me what gives, and I can't tell them—just that I don't want any. What is wrong with taking an innocent nip once in a while?

ANSWER:

I don't blame you for asking this question, even though the answer may appear to be quite obvious to some. Drinking beer is actually acceptable by the official creed of several churches, and by innumerable others who don't care what their church teaches. Consequently, you are not the only one who is confused in such situations as you describe.

Maybe an analysis of this kind of activity will help you come to your

own decision, and so I'll try to give some guidelines.

Watch carefully those who are drinking. Does this kind of "refreshment" add to their self-respect or dignity, or does it tend to do the opposite?

Watch, also, the group as a whole during one of these beer parties. As the consumption goes up, you will almost certainly see the discipline relaxed. If we ever amount to anything, it is discipline that brings out our value. The more discipline we lack or lose, the more worthless we become.

Then, think about the danger to life these people are when they leave their party with a fraction of their alertness left. This world has been enduring much sorrow caused by those who have had their proper senses deadened by alcohol. Should you ever get onto the wrong end of one of these deals, you would surely experience one of the sharpest of all life's miseries.

Consider the enormity of the drinking problem in our country. Do you want to be part of the answer to this disgrace, or are you anxious to align yourself with those who merely compound and enlarge the problem? You may think that you can remain in between—an innocent partaker. Everyone that sees you, though, will consider that you are the very same breed that every other alcohol sponge is.

The drink you talk about is not innocent. It is the first step of what could be a terrible journey. Don't stoop to the level of your crowd. Find other friends who have more to offer than future misery with blood-shot eyes!

night and today. I hope I can make friends with them." Mrs. Weaver smiled down at her daughter and Mr. Weaver nodded his head. He and his wife exchanged glances as if they knew something had happened on Louise's trip to bring about a change and help her make this decision.

They walked on in silence, enjoying a feeling of quiet peace.

After they left, Louise linked her arm in that of her mother and, leaning her head against her shoulder as they walked back to the house, she said, "Mother, they are much nicer than the group I was with last

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QUESTION:

I am engaged to be married to a wonderful guy with whom I've been going for over a year. We enjoy being together. The problem I mention seems to bother me more than my boy friend, even though I am sure that its consequences will affect both of us. We get into some pretty heavy petting after some of our dates, and I fear that things may get out of hand soon, if you know what I mean. What do you suggest?

ANSWER:

You are certainly wise to show alertness to the danger of committing a regrettable misdeed. Your behavior now will have a more profound effect on your marriage than you re-

alize, and so I encourage you to consider seriously the suggestions that follow. Bear in mind the fact that your base appetites are tempting you to participate in an experience that involves a very high cost and yet is almost certain to be disappointing before marriage.

First, discuss this problem with your boyfriend. You need to talk this matter over. If you are old enough to consider marriage, you ought to be mature enough to analyze the consequences of something as serious as premarital sexual intimacy. Be sure to do this at a time when both of you can talk about it objectively. This means, plainly stated, that it would be most unwise to discuss it when both or either of you are sexually aroused.

Second, arrive at a *firm* decision together. Avoid such conclusions as, "We'll try to be careful for the time being," or "We'll just keep doing the best we can," etc. Determine that you will positively maintain your proper discipline until marriage. If you can be faithful to your resolve before marriage, you will have no problems of being faithful to the vows taken during the wedding ceremony.

Third, avoid situations in which you become tempted to engage in this heavy and prolonged petting. Knowing that it is less than honorable for you to engage in sexual intimacy before marriage, you should also see the danger in activity that leads into that direction. You already fear being unable to cope with the frustration of having to stop short of the complete goal of such activity. This should give you enough reason not to begin.

Fourth, find ways to express affection for each other that will involve a minimum of sexual stimulation, avoiding the overt kinds of stimulus which clearly indicate a desire to fulfill a base appetite, such as certain kinds of body contact.

Fifth, participate in activities or programs that will lead you to goals that both of you think are good for you. Get together and push some church project that demands considerable time and attention. Become involved so that you will find satisfaction in doing something really worthwhile. Welcome dates with one, two, or more other couples. Learn to enjoy activities with larger groups.

Sixth, have an enjoyable evening at some event, and after experiencing a pleasant evening, return to your homes without giving in to the temp-

tation of parking, or spending several hours in an intimate atmosphere. Naturally, you will want to be alone as often as circumstances permit, but you would be wise to consider drives together during the daytime, or taking a walk in relaxing and leisurely fashion.

You have a sizeable task on your hands, but maintaining respect for each other is a most worthwhile endeavor. Grasp the job with resolute determination, and you will find that every effort invested will find multiplied returns after your marriage.

* * *

TRUTH AND NONSENSE

By Carolyn Clements

**A slender, lithe birch;
A tall, lofty pine;
A flower so fragile;
A knarled, old vine—
Each has its beauty
And each is a sign
Of the glorious Maker,
My Father Divine.**

**Birches tell stories
And pines whisper tales;
Flowers nod gently
And vines do not fail
To show me quite clearly
Who made hill and dale.
They just didn't happen
Or appear in a gale.**

**My Father made them;
This don't you see?
He needs them for all—
For you and for me.
"Evolution is nonsense!"
With that I agree,
And this will I teach
While men remain free!**

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I do not oppose the general principles of youthful dating as long as couples are not left alone with responsibilities too mature for them to accept. Parents might do well to provide activities for young teenagers which involve wholesome activity rather than to ban dating altogether at the risk of intense resentment.

QUESTION:

Is holding hands in public wrong?

ANSWER:

This is probably not a question of right and wrong as much as it is a matter of taste. There are times when it might be quite acceptable, such as in cases where one walks in a crowd and he wishes to avoid losing anyone. There may also be situations where one wishes to hurry, and he may give assistance to another, etc.

Further, it is hardly distasteful for couples who have been dating regularly or are engaged to hold hands with groups of their age in activities that might deem this show of affection appropriate. Newly married couples generally find it pleasing to hold hands, and anyone knowing their status finds it easy to forgive without

questioning whether or not it is in good taste.

Holding hands in public is in questionable taste when it is done by young people who are not old enough to become serious with each other. It is generally not in good taste to hold hands in front of parents or elderly people. It certainly is in bad taste to hold hands so much that you give the impression that you would become lost or withered if you disconnected!

As a rule, it is best policy not to hold hands in a manner that gives this interdigital activity public display. Keep it out of sight, if unmarried, and you will find that your interpersonal relationship in general will be the better off for it.

QUESTION:

How do you get the message across to a forward girl that you don't appreciate her attention and that you would like for her to "take off"?

ANSWER:

There is only one answer to this, and it always works. Be indifferent. This means that you will be courteous, but uninterested. Just act like it is not your fault the whole thing turned out the way it did, and you hope that one day it will be better for her.

Incidentally, not many fellows share your "fortune" in being chased by

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gals they do not want. Either you are an outstanding specimen indeed, or you have done something to encourage her. In either case, remember to be courteous.

QUESTION:

My boyfriend and I are having to get married. Only our parents and our pastor know about it. In spite of the secrecy, our pastor is insisting that we have only a small wedding, and he doesn't think I ought to wear white. I don't know whether to be disgusted or disappointed, or both? Why should our pastor be this way?

ANSWER:

It seems clear that you are disgusted or disappointed with the wrong person. Who got you into this situation, anyway? Sorry, sister, I'm so much on your pastor's side that if I knew who he was I'd send a letter to congratulate him.

White on a bride is a sign of chastity or virginity. You don't qualify, and any action to the contrary would be deceptive. Further, it is just a bit of a sham for the church to be the scene of an event that is supposed to mark the beginning of a new home and family unit when you and your friend have already been indulging in husband-wife relationships.

Your pastor is guiding this misadventure of yours into an honorable direction. You ought to be grateful instead of resentful. At this point I can offer no better advice than to sober up and begin listening a bit more to your minister. If either of your parents are getting a bit riled at him, the same advice goes for them!

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ry? Too often young people forget that marriage is a lifetime affair, which is terribly long. This is no time to be impetuous. If you are as impatient as all that, you have no right to ask anyone to live with you—not until you grow up just a bit more.

Courtship is a very vital and wonderful part of life. Think twice before ending it with anything as drastic as marriage. It is always good to have some idea how deep the water is before diving off a very high ledge.

QUESTION:

What do you consider to be a safe age difference between young people who are dating?

ANSWER:

Offhand, I would say that the girl could be up to three years older, or the boy five years older with couples that are in or near their twenties or older. The older the couple, the less important the age difference.

It is important to determine whether or not you can be comfortable with those who are in your companion's age group. If you are 16 and those of your boyfriend's age seem to be a bit "stuffy," look out. You may like

your boyfriend for now, but before long he'll seem just as old as the others.

Further, if your friend does not like to socialize with friends of your own age group, read the warning sign and take a detour. You are in for some difficult adjustment.

While there are numerous happily married couples whose age differences are quite a bit greater than those I suggest here, divorce statistics tend strongly to prove the validity of this suggestion.

QUESTION:

How can one tell when he is in love?

ANSWER:

About the same way he can tell when he is wet, he feels it. By asking this question you rather prove that you are not in love. When you do fall in love, you won't have to bother to ask.

WAIT!

One of God's aged and disciplined servants gave the following golden advice: "When trouble is brewing, keep still. When slander is getting on his legs, keep still. When your feelings are hurt, keep still until you recover from your agitation, at least. Things look different when seen through unagitated eyes. In a commotion, I once wrote a letter and sent it. How I wished later that I hadn't. The passing of the years, with their soul-refining and character-enobling lessons, taught me some needed lessons. I had another commotion. I wrote a long letter, but I put it in my pocket. How glad I was I did! With the passing of the days, it seemed less and less necessary to send the letter. I was not sure it would do any hurt, but in my doubtfulness, I leaned to reticence, and eventually I destroyed the letter. Time works wonders. Wait till you can speak calmly, and perhaps you will not need to speak. Silence is the most massive thing conceivable! It is strength shown in grandeur!"

—Moody Monthly

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MY INFLUENCE

**My life shall touch a dozen lives
Before this day is done,
Leave countless marks of good or ill,
Ere sets the evening sun.
This, the wish I always wish,
The prayer I always pray:
Lord, may my life help other lives
It touches by the way.**

—Anon.

* * *

Why do we sometimes complain when we are asked to pass out a few tracts? It's the least we can do for our Lord. After all, which are we more interested in: saving "souls" or saving "soles"?—Mike Weir

QUESTION:

You have admitted on some occasions that it is necessary for a person to date outside the church if he is to have any dates at all when there is no one suitable of the church membership that lives nearby. What about going with a fellow who does not believe in God at all, and doesn't even want me to talk about Him?

ANSWER:

"The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God..." (Psalm 14:1). Why spend your time with a person of that nature? An atheist is one who generally likes to discuss his ill-founded beliefs simply because he is foolish. Your friend has other troubles. Unless you are a skilled practicing psychiatrist, you would do much better to send your friend to one and begin seeing someone else socially.

QUESTION:

Would you be completely against a couple getting married after only two weeks of courtship?

ANSWER:

It takes people longer than that to buy an automobile! What's your hur-

Tell Me, Please

QUESTION:

Recently I was saved at a meeting and was baptized. It was a wonderful experience, and I couldn't deny that Jesus seemed very real to me. Sometimes, though, I have doubts that come into my mind. I doubt just a bit whether the experience I had was real, or whether there even is a God and a life to come. Do these doubts indicate that I may not really have been saved, or that I'm not living as close to God as I should?

ANSWER:

I would hope that doubts do not indicate anything as severe as your question implies, because there are times when I have them, too. I would think that every Christian has them once in a while, at least.

It sounds like you had a real genuine experience in becoming acquainted with your Saviour. Just because you left the devil, doesn't mean that he died, or that he is no longer interested in you. He uses these little doubts to weaken our faith if he can. He doesn't like losing someone like you.

When these doubts come, you might remember the devil's one virtue: he knows when to flee. James

Youth Questions

answered by
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advises us, "Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you" (James 4:7). So, Satan must be resisted. Shove your doubts aside mentally, and very soon you will find your faith returning stronger than ever.

One good way to fight doubt is to keep busy for God. It is when we are not exercised spiritually that we become weak and subject to the devil's attacks. Serve in any way you can at your church. Give testimonies as you have opportunity to do so. Read your Bible and pray plenty.

There are many good programs offered by the National Youth Department that will give excellent guidance in developing spiritual strength. You can read about them in other parts of this publication. Follow them diligently and you will be waging a strong and winning war against Satan, the adversary of your soul and the cause of doubt.

QUESTION:

I have a physical handicap which is the obvious type. With this disability it is doubtful that I could ever earn the serious attention of a member of the opposite sex, and yet I would like the attention as much as anyone

else. I often wonder why this had to happen to me? What is the justice in some of us being handicapped while others enjoy a full life?

ANSWER:

Obviously, your greatest handicap at present is your attitude. Practically all of us have our physical restrictions that limit some of our aspirations and goals in life. If you can show a very distinct part in your hair, you are much luckier than I am. However, I don't care too much because you probably can't comb your hair with a washcloth!

We are generally only as handicapped as we allow our attitudes to make us. You will be surprised to find that people generally take the same attitude toward your handicaps as you do. If they bother you, they will be noticed by and bother others. If you accept them and continue as normally as you can with them, you will be as acceptable to others as anyone else.

Members of both sexes generally select their friends because of the

personality he is, not on the basis of the physical specimen he may be. So you will never be a physical culturist. Ignore the girls who are looking for one. I have another handicap, I cannot play piano. Because of this handicap I didn't have a ghost of a chance to marry a girl who simply had to marry a piano player.

I hope you can see through these comments that you are projecting too much of your own ideas into the thoughts and interests of others. You must stop resenting your handicap and accept it. Only when you do so can you have enough self-confidence to see yourself as a personality. Once you can spring forth as a person in your own right—and you can—you will find a great many people out there as willing to accept you as they accept anyone else.

If you have a problem, you are encouraged to write to: Aim, Box 158, Stanberry, Missouri. Questions requesting a personal answer through the mail are honored, as well as those for print.

At the entrance to Cypress Gardens, Florida, is this inscription:

If you would have a mind at peace,
A heart that cannot harden,
Go find a door that opens wide
Upon a lovely garden.

The sentiment is beautiful and there is great restfulness in beauty. But the people who swarm there and swing open those gates don't give the impression that they have found the door to inner peace. The uneasiness is within.

*J. Wallace Hamilton in SERENDIPITY
(Fleming H. Revell Company)*

Tell Me, Please

Dear Readers:

The following letter describing a personal problem is being passed on through this column with the generous permission of its composer. It is really worth reading! It speaks more eloquently and persuasively than many thousand words I might have to offer.

"Dear Elder Straub,

"My problem began some time ago when I first got my own car and money. I started to run around more which caused me to gradually lose interest in church.

"Soon afterward I met what appeared to be a nice boy, and I asked him to attend church with me. After just one visit he began to make excuses, suggesting that his family didn't want him to go.

"We became engaged, anyway, and most of the wedding plans had been made when I found out that he had the drinking habit. Attempts to get him to stop only resulted in a broken engagement.

"I felt I had lost everything. There seemed to be nothing to live for. I went out with other men, including my ex-fiance. I began drinking with

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him and others. This led to meeting other men, married and single, with whom I drank, smoked and often petted. I stayed out late and even hosted drinking parties in my home.

"Before long I began hearing men saying unkind things about me, and my reputation was getting real muddy. I feared I would hurt both my parents and church if this continued, but I didn't stop to think. I felt I had lost everything when I lost my fiance.

"My parents are not at fault, because they gave me proper training. It just seems that my life is a failure. I desire to have another chance and a good experience with the Lord. I want to live for God, but I'm wondering if it isn't too late. It would be nice to be able to marry some nice young man and have children to be reared in the church.

"Do you think I could still come back to the Lord? How may I get rid of my bad reputation? What can I do to still get some of the good things from life that any young person wants?

"You may print this in AIM to help others avoid the terrible mistakes I've made.

"Thank you.

Once a Christian."

ANSWER:

There is no reason for you to think that it is too late for you to return to the Lord. You do have a battle to win, and you must keep struggling. Your courageous act in putting your problems on paper and sending for some help is a real stride toward victory, even though you have a distance to go.

Without enlarging on the nature or intensity of your past misdeeds, it may be helpful for you to recognize that you are prodigal, and identify yourself with the one in Jesus' parable (Luke 15:1-32). The most significant point in the prodigal son's return to his father is when he came to himself as he sat in the pigpen. From there on some real positive desire kept him going until he was completely reinstated.

You, too, have come to yourself. Now return home to your heavenly Father, just as the prodigal of the parable. You will have to walk a little ways on your own, but keep going. The father of the parable is our Father in heaven. When He sees you've walked far enough showing that you really intend to get home, He'll rush toward you and give you a "welcome home" experience such as you can hardly imagine!

Your reputation will change with you. Perhaps it will take a bit longer,

When Phillips Brooks met Helen Keller, who later became the miracle of her generation, he was asked to convey to this deaf and blind mute the love and nature of God. It took considerable time before he was able to bridge the handicaps that separated them, but suddenly the light of understanding crossed her face, and she signaled back to him, "I always knew there was a God, but didn't know His name."

Kermit R. Olsen in
The Magnitude of Prayer
(Fleming H. Revell Company)