

# I NEED SOME ANSWERS



**DATING • LOVE • FRIENDS • FAMILY • FUTURE**

**NOT TO BE SOLD.** Produced as a free  
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# I NEED SOME ANSWERS

Life is full of questions, and sometimes, it seems, too few answers. Especially questions about human relations—questions about boyfriends and girl friends, about sex, about making more friends, about getting along with our families.

Answering those questions is what this brochure is all about.

Since we began publishing a magazine for young people—*Youth 81*—in 1981, thousands of letters have come in asking for help, for advice, for answers. Those answers have been published in the magazine over the years, and now we've gathered together articles and short answers that deal with the "most asked questions."

Questions like: How can I catch the attention of someone of the opposite sex and get him or her to like me? What about age differences in dating? What about kissing? How can you know if it's real love?

How can I have more friends? What if my friend becomes an enemy?

How can I get my parents to let me do more things? I don't like the way I look—what can I do about it? What does the future hold for me?

This isn't the kind of brochure you need to read from cover to cover. Check the contents and turn to the subjects you're most curious about. Or just skim through. We want this brochure to be helpful to you in solving and preventing problems and in making your life more happy and fulfilling.

Feel free to send for the additional free literature offered to help answer your other questions. (See the back cover for our address nearest you.) You deserve to know. You need to know!



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# The ANSWER to the MOST ASKED QUESTION

**C**an you guess what question teens ask us more than any other?

Give up? Probably not. You probably guessed it as soon as you read the title!

And yes, you are correct. The most asked question is: "I really like this person, but I don't know if he [or she] likes me. How can I get him to like me as much as I like him?"

Why should this be the most asked question? On the other hand, what is wrong with a teen wanting to know how to attract the opposite sex? Of course, nothing is wrong with knowing, at least as long as the reason you want to know is the right reason, and you apply the information in the right way, and at the right time.

And further, perhaps the reason so many ask this question is that no one has ever told you the answer! If that is so, and it probably is, then you strongly deserve the answer. So here it is, the answer to the most asked question.

**Q. How can a person make someone of the opposite sex like him or her?**

**A. You can't.** That's right, you can't. You cannot "get" members of the opposite sex to like you. Nor can you "make them" like you. Nor can you "trap" them or "trick" them into liking you, at least not for long, and not for real.

Please don't misunderstand. We are not saying that you are helpless to find friends of the opposite sex, or that you are doomed to a life of loneliness as a bachelor or spinster. We are only saying that you cannot make someone like you, but there is much you can and should do if you are to someday find the person of your dreams to live with as husband and wife.



You cannot *get* someone of the opposite sex; you must *attract* him or her. And you can only attract others by becoming the type of person others wish to know, both now and in the future.

A lot of people have tried to *get* others to like them. It's the usual approach in our society, and the approach probably most common in your school.

But in the end trying to *get* someone to like you doesn't work because it is based on temporary and superficial things: You must look a certain way or do a certain thing, rather than really *be* a certain way.

## The Common Approach

For girls, this common approach means you must dress in the latest and most expensive styles, be a cheerleader or on the student council. And for too many girls it means that they must act flirty, seem sexy and maybe dress seductively. And to keep the attention of the boys whom such actions seem to get, they must do things on dates like necking or petting, or more.

For the boys, this means you must be considered good looking, maybe be a star on the school teams and perhaps own a car and



have lots of money. And it means you must take out the right girls to the right places and make sexual advances on dates even if you really feel wrong about it.

All these approaches are simply gimmicks to try to get the attention of members of the opposite sex. And they may work, for a while. But the quality of the person you attract by superficial methods won't be high, and the relationship won't last. This has been the cause of far too many painful breakups.

Rather, the best approach is simply to become a person of quality who is a real prize for someone else of quality. This means that you must work on yourself in every aspect to improve yourself.

Jesus Christ taught this same important principle, in less romantic terms, in Luke 6:38 (*New King James Bible*) when he said: "Give, and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you."

When this principle is applied to the subject of romance, this verse means that if you develop yourself to where you are an attractive, kind, friendly, warm, talented person—that is, if you have nice qualities to give to someone else—others who have these same qualities will be attracted to you and will like you.

This means, of course, that you should diligently improve, for example, your looks. Lose weight, exercise, find a hairstyle that is flattering. It is a shame that most young people don't realize—and most adults don't either—that no one is unattractive if he or she takes pains to find a look and style that works for him or her.

But don't stop there. No, go ahead and diligently work on your personality. Read books about being friendly and dealing with peo-

ple. And learn how to treat other teens so they feel friendly toward you!

And do even more. Develop your mind by reading and studying and getting good grades. Completely develop yourself and you will be a prize that someone else wants desperately to win. Instead of trying to *get* a friend, you will have so much to give that others will try to get you!

By now, it will be obvious that this concept of becoming something special—a prize for others to win—is a long-term project. And that is one reason that teens haven't yet found the man or woman of their dreams. They simply haven't developed yet to the point where they are the jewel that others want.

But that is fine, because that is the way it is supposed to be. Young people shouldn't be looking to marry yet, or even to go steady yet.

#### Training for tomorrow

Young people are supposed to be training to become, down the road when they are adults, the ideal

**Instead of trying  
to get a friend . . .  
others will try to  
get you!**

mate for someone else. Therefore, teenage is the time for development, and not merely an arena for romance.

I could not allow myself to complete this without telling you why I wrote it. I received a very nice letter from a friend I knew back in my teen years in college. She wrote in part: "What prompted me to write [to you] was a question . . . about a teenager who felt

left out because she had no boyfriend.

"I thought [your answer] was spot on in directing her to develop herself for the future and not worry about the present. This thought, in turn, caused me to

**The quality of the  
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won't be high.**

think about the double standard of the teenage years. Most teenagers want desperately to be popular and will go to almost any lengths to become so. Smoking, drinking, giving or taking liberties with the opposite sex, dressing immodestly to attract, etc., are almost always done to be popular only to find that later in life the men and women most sought after for marriage are those who have not done such things. In other words, cheap popularity doesn't last!"

#### "Cheap Popularity Doesn't Last"

Did you read her last sentence carefully? "Cheap popularity doesn't last!"

Her letter got me thinking. I had seen a big pile of questions from many teens, all asking, in their own way, how to be popular with members of the opposite sex. Perhaps I took them too lightly. Perhaps, I thought to myself, I should write an article to answer these questions.

So I did.

The irony of this subject is that not only does it answer the "most asked question," it also gives the "most neglected answer." For only a relatively few people ever put this simple advice into practice.

But you can be among those few. If you do, you will reap the benefits of close friendships now and a happy marriage in the future. □



**M**aybe you don't turn beet red every time you talk to a member of the opposite sex, but do you sometimes feel reluctance or even fear?

You can feel more comfortable around others, whether you work together in the science laboratory, throw around ideas in history discussions, eat together in the school cafeteria or meet at church. Not only that, these conversation tips will help you build friendships.

Even the most popular person has to make an effort to get out there and be friendly. The Bible says a person who wants friends must show himself or herself friendly (Proverbs 18:24).

What we're talking about is the right kind of self-confidence. Some may cringe at the thought of talking to certain people, and so put off potential meetings.

God doesn't want you to crawl under a rock, but rather to be a shining beacon, an example that others can see.

Suppose you are a girl stuck in a long lunch line with nothing to do but wait. What a waste of time, you think, so instead of fidgeting feet and avoiding glances, you decide that you'll talk to the boy next in line.

But . . . how do you start? What do you say?

Negative thoughts may pop into your head, like: If I talk to him, I'll probably say something dumb. Then he'll think I'm weird and won't want to talk to me again.

Not so, says Dr. Robert Woolfolk, a researcher at Rutgers University. The boy probably feels as nervous as you do. He advises telling yourself: "If I should make a mistake or say something silly, it will only make him feel more at ease. It's rare that someone gets rejected because of one or two foolish comments."

At first, don't worry about saying things more important than small talk because that's a safe way to locate common ground.

Make sure to remember his name if you just learned it. If you already knew his name, use it.

Take time to find out about him and what he's accomplished. Bring it up by saying something

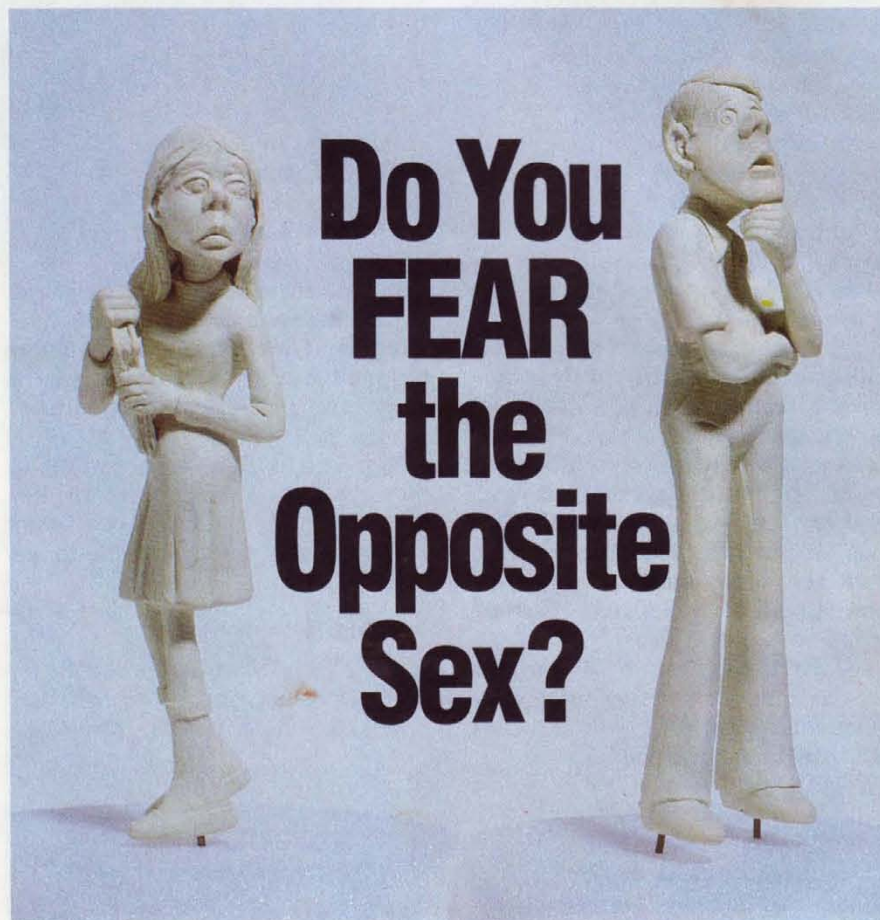
like, "I understand that you are quite a basketball player."

Having a giving attitude and showing concern will dispel fear of the opposite sex, or anyone for that matter. Confidence and concern add up to conversations that work.

Once the conversational ice is broken, most people feel more

ter too. Remind yourself that a person with a grumpy attitude appears to have a selfish sense of importance. People who have few friends and the most trouble around the opposite sex are those who find it difficult to give.

Because they think only of themselves, they have a hard time enjoying people.



*Here are some pointers for conversations that work—even with the opposite sex!*

comfortable. Simple little words like "thank you," "you're welcome," "would you mind," "please" and "may I" convey respect and appreciation to others.

Politeness may not always come easily. We all have days when we feel insecure and tend to withdraw into ourselves. But don't neglect giving a greeting to someone in the hall at school, for instance—not only will he or she brighten up, but you will probably feel bet-

ter too. Keep in mind that practicing social skills is vital not only for conversing with someone of the opposite sex, but for talking to anyone—even someone you don't know in the grocery store.

In short, knowing right human relations is essential to living in a world where another person is born every two seconds. That's a lot of people to deal with, so it's worth taking the time to learn how to do it right. □





**I**n the dark ages of the early '60s, the average teenage boy was always madly in love, going steady and breaking hearts even before his first bout with acne had disappeared.

At least that's what I thought after watching a rerun of that dynamic and mind-gripping television drama, *Leave It to Beaver*.

I thought, Boy, I'm really slow—here I am at the ancient age of 15, and no girl friend, not even one date to my credit! I must have a problem!

Then, at 16, came my first teen party. I knew I'd be a social reject. The place was packed with seasoned campaigners and smooth operators who were sure to make me look like a hick. *Actually*, the party turned out to be a complete drag. All these Don Juans ended up sitting around twiddling their thumbs.

#### What About Today?

So much for the '60s. But have times changed that much? I'm sure many of you still have the same pressure we did to have a steady girl or boyfriend. It

## How About a DATE?

*This different approach to dating has a lot of advantages!*

was and still can be a kind of status symbol.

In the '60s, some kids were so uptight that they would lie to their friends about going steady. The whole thing was a big con. It's funny how television and movies encourage kids to go steady before

marriage, and then after marriage not much emphasis is placed on staying that way.

Something is wrong. Today, teenagers aren't relaxed and happy, and most marriages aren't a haven of bliss.

Is it really so clever to be locked into an early steady relationship with someone? I remember a couple of fellows at my school who ended up marrying their steady girl friends—the only girls they had dated. It all seemed a little claustrophobic.

When you are young it is a time to have fun. It is a time to spread your wings and enjoy the scenery. It is not a time to be burdened with a heavy romantic relationship.

That's the beauty of group dating—that is, going out in a group and not in a pair. Group dating can be to restaurants, dances, surfing, bowling, skating, hik-



ing and so on (see the box). It is always fun, because you are with your friends.

### Lots of Advantages

Group dating has all of the following advantages (assuming, of course, you're in with a good group!):

*It takes the pressure off.* There is safety in numbers. If you make a *faux pas* (a nice term for a stupid mistake), it will be lost in the crowd.

Imagine yourself getting up from the table with your napkin still sticking to your trousers. It might be a big laugh in a group, but it could be a total disaster on a heavy date.

*Group dating enables you to learn.* By watching others, you will learn what to do in unfamiliar sit-

## That's the beauty of group dating—it's always fun, because you're with your friends.

uations. If you go ice-skating, the rest of the group will help you. It is all part of the fun.

At a restaurant, you can copy the guy who seems to know what he is doing. Do you know how to correctly use the vast array of silver at your setting at a formal meal?

*It is insurance against a boring date.* Nothing is worse than being out with someone you don't get along with. You just sit there, not speaking, staring out into space. Seconds seem like minutes, min-

utes like hours. But if your friends are with you, you can always have a fun time.

*Group dating helps you avoid wrong relationships.* If you are going out with many of your friends, you won't be as likely to get romantically involved too early. Of course it is natural for boys and girls to be attracted to each other. If you're not careful, you can start to think you are deeply in love, when in fact you're just physically attracted to someone.

When this happens, you end up daydreaming about that special someone instead of using your time productively.

This is courting disaster, and could stunt your personal development. In contrast, by group dating you will make many friends and learn about all types of people.

*Group dating builds friendships.* Pairing off, on the other hand, can cause a group of friends to disintegrate into jealous triangles. A little parade of notes usually passes across the back of the classroom—

"I saw you with him—he's mine!" Soon the group has lost the fun of being together.

When you date a variety of people, you are giving of yourself to the whole group. That way everyone will be friends.

While you are young, you have an excellent chance to develop dating skills with your parents and friends around. You are able to have a lot of good, even hilarious, times and to also develop friendships and social skills.

Don't limit yourself to one person, but enjoy having a good time with everyone. □

## Group Dating Ideas

Are you looking for a creative idea for a group date? A group date need not cost money or even require transportation. Here are ideas that may spark your interest:

Take a long walk on a short pier. (This is most fun when the pier has lots of activities on it, such as carnival games or bumper cars.)

Have a barbecue and sing-along.

Visit a park and see the exhibits that are sometimes on display. Hiking is also available in many parks.

Go on a theme hunt with your camera, taking pictures of a theme such as children, people talking or signs with clever messages.

Play board games or build a puzzle.

Tour a factory. Often large businesses provide free tours that are educational and fun.

Put on a dinner with a foreign theme.

Go fly a kite!

Make captions to the pictures in your old photo albums.

Find a recreational sport you can play, such as golf, tennis, volleyball, skating, skiing or bowling.

Ping-Pong, horseshoes and croquet are other interesting games you can play.

Go see a stage play put on by students. Many high schools and colleges put on public performances for little or no admission cost.

Organize a scavenger hunt, where you try to locate hard-to-find objects.

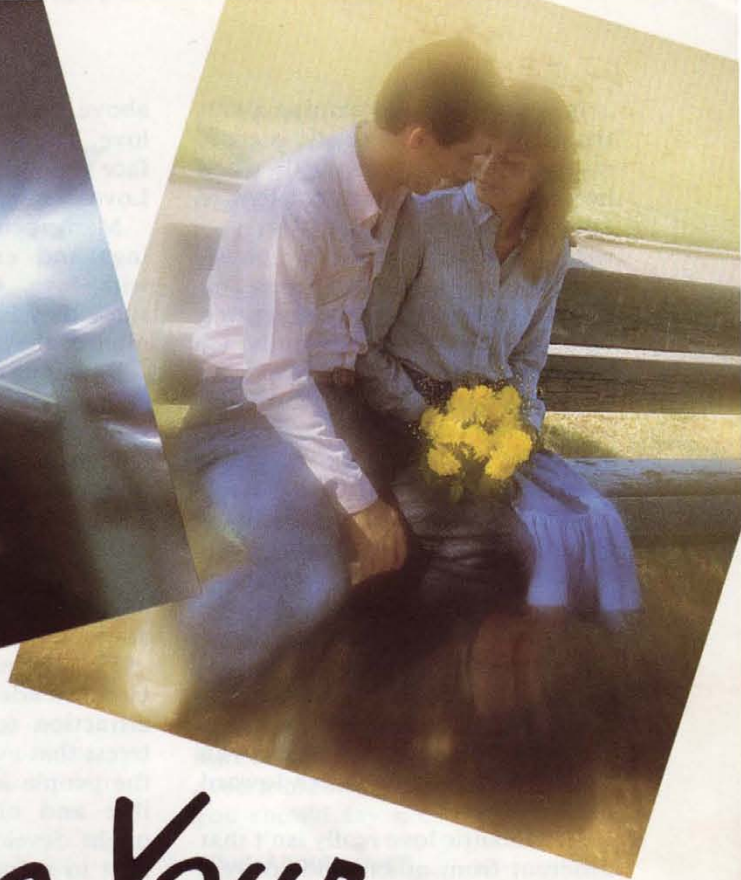
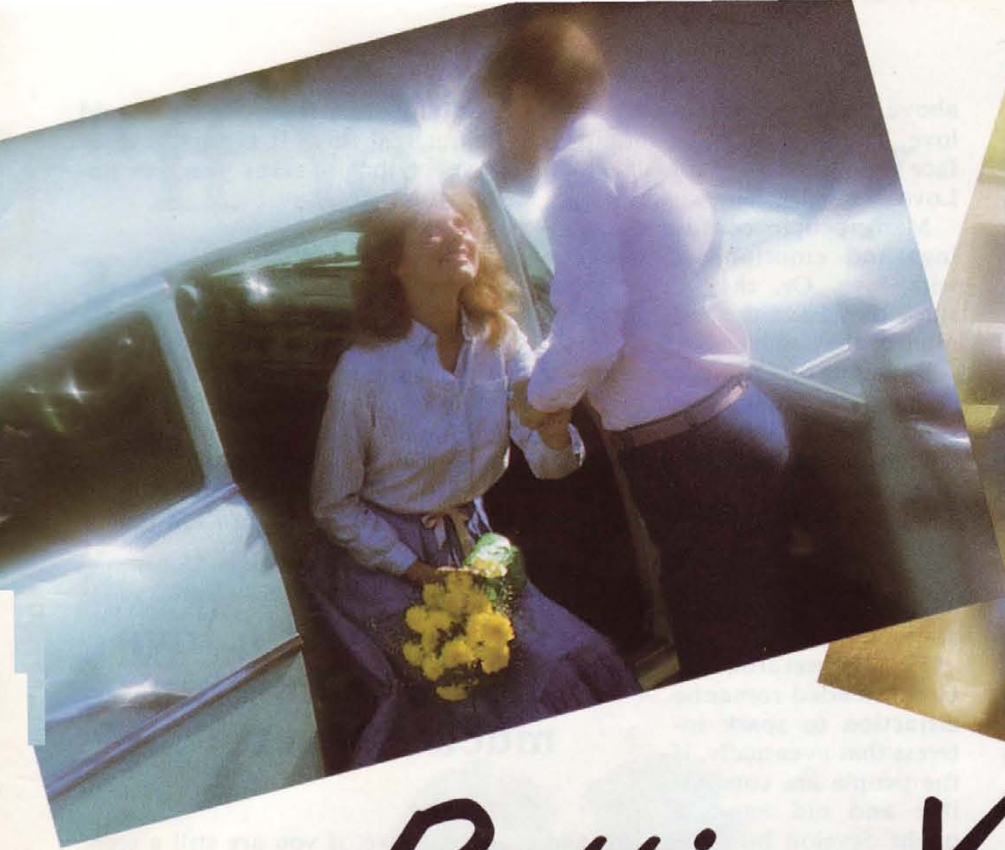
Do a service project for the disadvantaged or elderly.

Have a hayride and square dance.

Ride bicycles, shoot pool, play miniature golf, make up new games with a Frisbee, pan for gold, take a walk through town, visit an art show or museum . . .







# Putting Your **LOVE** to the Test

*What is real love, and how do you know when you're in it?*

**H**undreds of songs have been written about love, right and wrong, and the feelings that go with it. And for good reason. It's a major part of life.

And right love, with the right person and at the right time, can bring a lot of happiness. But wrong love can bring a ton of trouble instead.

The story often goes something like this: A teenage girl of, say, 15, falls in love with an older guy of, say, 17. They feel so swept up with romance and love that they do things that worry their parents.

They date steadily. They begin kissing and necking, and maybe more. Then one day they go fur-

ther and have sex or run away and get married.

And why? Because they are in love—or are they? Their parents don't usually think so.

What is real love, and how do you know when you're in it?

Even if you're not in love now, someday you'll want to know for sure whether what you are experiencing is real love. Your future happiness depends on it.

But most people, including most adults, simply don't know what love is.

Love, as the Bible shows, is an outgoing concern for the one loved. It is a selfless desire to give of self for the benefit of another.

But, even so, there are obviously different types of love. For example, you no doubt have a family love between you and your brothers and sisters (sure you may argue, but you still have that deep family bond). Also, you have strong feelings for your close friends that could also be called a type of love.

## **Romantic Love**

It seems that romantic love is much different from these other kinds of love. Just what is this thing called romantic love?

First, let's understand what it's not. It is not the surge of warmth people feel when they are near the person they think they love.

It is not the excitement, the rising pulse rate, the blushing, the dry mouth, the butterfly stomach or the perspiring brow of the person in love.



It is not the daydreaming about the person when he or she is gone, nor the staring at the person when he or she is near. It is not loss of appetite or fitful sleep.

These things are merely physical and emotional responses and feelings. They might be triggered by a good figure or body build. Or by a pretty or handsome face. Or by other things you are not even consciously aware of—but that still have the effect of causing excitement.

These things are just feelings. Happy, exciting, powerful feelings, yes. But just feelings, not love.

Romantic love is a lot more than just these feelings. It also includes something much deeper. That something is love as it was defined earlier in this article—an unselfish outgoing concern toward the one loved.

So romantic love really isn't that different from other kinds of real love. Oh, it includes the additional element of the romantic feelings mentioned

above. But these feelings are not the love. The love isn't just some surface thing that fades after a while. Love is much deeper.

Many people confuse the feelings and emotions of romance with love. Or, they decide that since they have the feelings of romance, they must also have love.

Believing that these feelings are a sure sign of love is a tragic mistake. Love can and should produce these feelings of romance, but these feelings can also exist without love. They can exist merely because the mind and body of one person react emotionally to the presence of another.

This is natural, for God intended romantic attraction to spark interest that eventually, if the people are compatible and old enough, might develop into true love and lead to marriage.

#### The Qualities of Love

Since romantic feelings do not ensure that it is real love, how can you know when it is real? What are the qualities of a real, right kind of love?

First, real love must be selfless.

A person with real love wants the best *for* the other person, not *from* him or her. Real love isn't concerned with getting affection, gifts, attention or anything else from the person, but in trying to do what is really best for the one loved.

Second, real love survives troubles.

That romantic attraction that dies with the first misunderstanding is not love.

Third, real love remains steady over time.

Right here is where many people planning marriage should stop and think. A courtship that has lasted only two months may not be based on love, because it has not yet proved itself. Love takes time to grow strong enough to last.

Fourth, although it is accompanied by romantic feelings, real love does not die out even when the first excitement of romance decreases.

Many other things could be said about real love. It is such a deep subject that it takes years to understand fully.

#### Avoiding the Pitfalls

One thing tends to complicate the matter. When you become attracted to a person, strong romantic feelings may so overwhelm you that you have great difficulty deciding whether you are really in love or not—even if you know what true love is.

And even if you can tell that it

## Real romantic love includes something much deeper....

is real love, if you are still a teen, you probably should not get married yet because you haven't had enough time to prepare for the awesome responsibilities of marriage.

Some people think that if you love someone you should marry him or her no matter what. But there must be a lot more to it than that. Are you spiritually, educationally, emotionally, financially, and in every other way compatible and prepared for marriage?

Many wonder how they can be sure that a particular person is compatible with them—that they've found the right one.

The best way is to get to know a lot of different people of the opposite sex and find out what types of personalities and characteristics you get along with best. Many unhappy marriages result from people narrowing down the field too soon.

You can avoid the pain of wrong love. Remember that feelings are not themselves love, and can lead to pain and wrong if they are followed blindly.

But right feelings, backed up with right, true love, at the right time and with the right, compatible person, can be more right than just about anything else can be! □





# “If You Really Loved Me, You Would...”

*If your best friend wants you to do something you know is wrong, how can you stand up for your own beliefs?*



Several young people have written to ask: “My boyfriend [or girl friend] wants me to have sex with him [or her]. I don’t want to, but I want to keep the friendship. How can I say no in such a way that he [or she] will understand I mean it? I want my friend to stop bothering me, to stop asking for sex.”

In past ages, and in some societies today, almost everyone agreed that sex before marriage was wrong. Guys and girls, if they wanted to avoid sex, could count on their friends to back them up in their decision.

But in Western society today, premarital sex has become so common that it’s becoming harder to find friends who agree with right moral principles. It’s getting harder to say no. Therefore, it’s even more important to know *why* you should say no.

## What About Love?

Sexual pressure is often the greatest when it’s confused with love. Is sex OK when you’re in love? Many teens who want sex say it is OK if you’re in love, and many are quick to call their feelings “love” to try to make sex OK. But it’s not OK.

You need to know why, and you need, perhaps soon, to know how to say no despite the pressure you will feel to give in. And you need to mean it, believe it and say it in such a way that your friends know exactly where you stand.

Say you don’t want sex. Say it firmly. Make it clear. A nasty and false rumor says that girls secretly enjoy sex even if they “pretend” they don’t want to have sex. The result is that thousands of women have been raped by their dates.

The quicker you say “No, absolutely not,” the quicker the pressure will stop. If you don’t sound very certain, you’ll be asked again and again. And if you say, “I don’t want to yet,” you’ll be asked again—soon—to see if you have changed your mind.

A lot of premarital sex happens without anyone ever asking. Guys and girls simply get pretty heavy into kissing and feeling and somehow it happens without either re-



son saying anything about it until after it's over.

That's too late, gang! It's important to say no before either of you starts to get sexually aroused. Avoid temptation. Stay around other people. That means don't pair off alone to hug and kiss.

The boy usually gets aroused first, probably before the girl realizes it. So, guys, if you do, you should stop. But, girls, often the guy does not stop, so you'll have to say no to any act that's likely to make matters worse. Remember, stopping is a lot harder than saying no in the first place.

It's not easy to say no. It may seem like you're insulting your date. Explain that the reason you are saying no is you *do* respect your date. Then don't let yourself be talked out of your decision.

Some girls seem to think that they aren't attractive unless they can get guys' sexual attention. Such girls may get attention, but the attention doesn't mean the guys think they are beautiful. Guys are attracted to them because they are easy marks, not because they think they are especially pretty. Getting that kind of attention isn't worth how rotten you're going to feel later for giving in.

#### **"If You Loved Me..."**

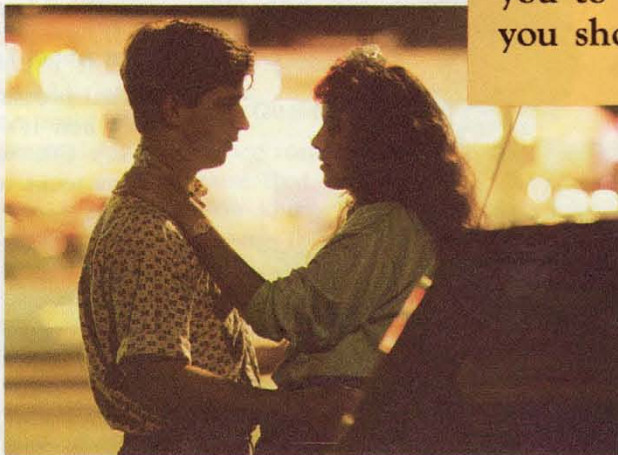
One of the most common "lines" or arguments is that "if you loved me, you wouldn't say no." The idea seems to be that you would do anything, no matter how stupid, immoral or illegal, just because you "love" someone. Nonsense!

If a person really loves you, cares about your feelings, he or she won't pressure you to do anything you should not. If your friend would desert you for not having sex, he or she isn't much of a friend. If sex is more important

than friendship, it's too important, and you don't need that kind of friend.

It's OK to love someone without jumping into bed with him or her. You should love people who will never be a sex partner. Love and sex are two quite different things. If your friend doesn't understand the difference, he or she doesn't even understand what true love is, and certainly does not love you.

If all your friends are sexually active, or want to be, it's going to affect you. Studies have shown that if your friends are sexually active, you are much more likely to become sexually active also. So look at



**If a person really loves you, he or she won't pressure you to do things you shouldn't.**

your friends. If you don't want to be like them, find some new friends whom you can respect.

If most of your dates seem to want sex, you need to ask yourself why. Do you act or dress in such a way as to be attractive to the wrong type? Where do you meet your friends? Does your behavior on a date encourage sexual interest?

Most young people don't choose their friends—they just happen. If you want to change, you'll have to work at it, and it will take time.

People in business are often advised to surround themselves with successful men and women as friends, and they will also learn to become successful.

In a similar way, if you surround yourself with people who

are always getting themselves and you in trouble, you will soon think that is a normal way of life and you'll live the same way.

Surround yourself with friends who are honest, loyal, hardworking—who have a lot of common sense—and you will also develop this kind of character. And you will be the kind of friend they will want to be with.

#### **Sex Belongs in Marriage**

Here are more reasons to say no to premarital sex—worry about pregnancy or sexually transmitted diseases. Be warned, though: If those are the only reasons you have, the pressure will get pretty intense if your date has a condom and starts talking about "safe sex."

Pregnancy and disease—although both are extremely serious problems—aren't the main reasons premarital sex is wrong. Many sexually active teenagers somehow avoid those problems, but that doesn't make it right. It's wrong for everyone—guy or girl, young or old—whether a person gets "caught" or not.

Sex was designed by the Creator God to help husbands and wives stay close together—physically and emotionally. Any other use, any premarital use of sex, makes sex less effective in what it was designed to do.

That's one of the reasons so many marriages are breaking up today. No one can avoid the automatic penalty.

All of you want a happy, successful marriage someday. Well, if you do, remember sex should be saved for marriage. I hope you know that, and make sure your dates know it too.

By the way, we have prepared a reprint of an article on this subject titled "Are You Sure Everybody's Doing It?" We offer it to you free of charge if you write in and request it. □



**Q** I'm 13 years old in about a week. A real cute boy in school asked me to a movie, but my parents say no—that I'm too young to date. I don't see how dating this boy can hurt anything. What do you think?

**A** The other girls are too young for boyfriends—if by that they mean guys they feel they are in love with or steady dates.

Sadly, it is a type of status symbol to have a boyfriend or girl friend since it "proves" that you are desir-

cumstances. We then advise dating in groups, attending wholesome activities where young people can get acquainted. And we further believe dating in the teen years should not be steady and serious, leading young people to think of marriage before they are mentally, financially, educationally and in every other way ready.

With that in mind we can discuss age difference. There is

## QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

**A** Parents and teens often disagree about the best age to start dating. Ever wonder why? The reason is that parents and teens look at dating differently. Teens view dating simply as a chance to have fun at some activity in the company of someone of the opposite sex. Parents view dating as a complex social relationship, accompanied by emotions and physical pulls that require a great amount of maturity to be handled properly.

To be frank, the parents' view is the more realistic one. With the newfound emotion of sexual awareness does not automatically come either the knowledge or character to properly channel those feelings.

To gain the proper knowledge, a young teenager must learn by reading and listening to his or her parents. Character also comes with time.

When each individual teen should begin to date is a decision that should be left to parents who have good judgment based on an understanding of the human mind as explained in the Bible. Perhaps the age will vary for each individual, but pre-high school graduate teens usually profit more from group dating or social events than pairing off by themselves at unsupervised activities.

**Q** I am 14 years old and I have a big problem. All the other girls at school have boyfriends and I don't. My dad tells me not to worry because I am too young for that sort of thing anyway. But that doesn't help me feel better, because if my girl friends aren't too young, why am I?

able to the opposite sex. But this generally means facing the pressures of dating, especially dating only one person, that often lead to sexual experimentation and all its harmful consequences.

Of course, it may be that you and these girls use the term *boyfriend* for any boy you like as a friend and sit next to in history class. It is, of course, natural to like some guys more than others.

But if the guys are not now finding you extremely interesting, you really don't need to worry. You still are quite young, and if the guys were too interested, you'd probably eventually wish that they hadn't been—that you hadn't been pressured to grow up too fast.

Besides, in time—at the time you are old enough to begin an ideal marriage, we hope—you almost certainly will attract the interest of a number of men, some of whom you will also be attracted to. If you're developing your character and personality now, you can count on it.

**Q** Is it a bad idea to date someone younger than you?  
[or] Is it OK for a guy to date a girl two or three years older than he is?

**A** First realize that we advocate dating only when parents and family agree on the proper age and other cir-

obviously nothing wrong with spending time with a boy or a girl a few months or a year younger than you. But problems develop when a young man about 21 or 22 wants to date a 15- or 16-year-old girl. He naturally wants to start thinking more seriously, while she is not yet ready to assume the responsibilities of marriage and family.

When a person reaches a more mature age of the early 20s, an age difference of a few years doesn't matter much at all. There are many successful marriages where the wife is a few years older than her husband. And certainly many marriages take place where the man is older.

## DATING, KISSING & SEX

Perhaps you've asked yourself some of these questions: What's the right age to begin dating? What about age differences? Is kissing OK? What about necking and petting?



But while you are a teen, keep your dating to those in your own age bracket. You'll be preparing to make a mature decision when you are older.

**Q** Is kissing wrong for teenagers?

**A** We'll go way out on a limb on this one. Our mailboxes may be jammed to overflowing, since many of you are going to disagree. But we will not dodge issues. Here is the plain truth on this subject.

Kissing was designed by God to be a manner in which a husband and wife express their love for one another. It is part of the sexual stimulus and response mechanism that belongs in the wholesomeness of sex within marriage.

By no means does kissing have to always lead to sexual activity, but it is a manner of expressing love and feeling. If it weren't that way, it wouldn't be fun. Kissing one you love is fun and exciting. It's designed by God that way.

But romantic kissing is not for teens.

Of course family members show affection for one another by kissing. But there is an obvious difference between a boy kissing his mom good-bye before leaving for the evening and the way he may romantically want to kiss his girl friend.

A sister may give a congratulatory kiss for something her brother accomplished. That's perfectly normal. Children kiss their parents and grandparents. All well and good.

But kissing passionately and romantically on teenage dates? It simply shouldn't be done. If that sounds like we live in another century, well, that's just the way it will have to sound. Save romantic kissing for the proper time and the right person in your life. You'll always be glad you did!

(For a fuller explanation of the role of kissing, and of the whole subject of love, marriage and sex,

*“I know it's wrong to 'go all the way' on dates, but what about necking?”*

ask for your free copy of our book, *The Missing Dimension in Sex*. (See the back cover for the address nearest you.)

**Q** I know that it is wrong to “go all the way” on a date, but my boyfriend and I like to neck because we care for each other. Is just necking or petting wrong?

**A** Yes, and here's why. Many people think necking and petting are in a totally separate category than “going all the way” and that therefore they are OK even though total intercourse is not. This reasoning is wrong.

The sex act is not merely intercourse. It is a whole series of events that begins with the first intimacy and includes necking and petting as much as the final act. Therefore these sexual activities do break the biblical command against fornication and are harmful.

Why? God's law is for our good, and the commandments against premarital sex are for our good also.

The crux of the matter is that marriage—to be successful—must be founded on the special feelings two people have for each other alone.

To experiment with premarital sex on dates makes sex no longer unique between a person and his

or her future mate, and hence weakens the marital bond even though marriage may come years later.

And, in addition, it can spread sexually transmissible diseases, cause unwanted pregnancies, create the flow of powerful emotions teenagers are not equipped to handle and divert one's attention from studies and career planning into daydreaming about romance and sex.

Finally, it creates a sort of sexual infatuation with another person that clouds one's thinking and may make him or her marry simply for sexual gratification rather than true love. Many, many marriages end in divorce because the parties married the wrong person simply out of the emotional turmoil caused by sexual experimentation.

**Q** I am not a teenager, but I am a mother of several teenage girls. I've read your articles saying premarital sex is wrong and I agree. But in this world I think that boys sometimes feel this applies to girls only, but not to them. It is a double standard.

**A** You are undoubtedly correct. A double standard does exist in the minds of many in our world today. They condemn girls for promiscuity, but chuckle or at least tolerate the boys doing these things.

Therefore let all teens, both girls and boys, read this and think about it. Premarital sex is harmful and a sin. It is a sin for both girls and guys in equal degree. And it absolutely is harmful to both sexes.

Any young man who feels that he can engage in premarital sex less wrongfully or with less harm psychologically than a girl is kidding himself and is dead wrong. Common sense tells us that, if anything, since man is often the aggressor, the male is the most to blame.

Perhaps this one statement won't set straight this misconception completely, but we hope it will be a start. □



# “What After You’ve Made Mistakes?”

**O**ne young woman wrote that she had made a terrible mistake, immediately regretted it and now hates herself for it. She feels ashamed, dirty, scarred for life. She can't forgive herself and she's not sure God has forgiven her either.

She's too ashamed to tell her parents, doesn't want to hurt them, and she worries about what her future husband will think. She's scared and miserable and wishes the whole experience were a nightmare that would go away.

Every one of us has in one way or another amassed a huge debt of sin to Almighty God. And some, unlike this contrite young woman, have repeated the same sins over and over.

Are there some sins that are even too terrible for God to forgive? No, Jesus Christ's death can free us from the torment of guilt, from the penalty of our sinful deeds—all of them. He died for all the sins of every human being who ever lived or will live. The death of God's only Son paid the enormous price for our breaking of God's good and righteous commandments.

## What Must We Do?

But to receive that forgiveness from God, there is something we must do. First, repent of the sin we have committed and second, have faith in God's forgiveness. What does it mean to repent? Repentance is a change of mind and attitude. It's a complete about-face from our

sinful actions of the past. It's not just feeling sorry for what we've done because we don't like to suffer the effects of our actions. Repentance means we're sick of what we've done, so sick of it we're determined *never* to repeat it.

I believe the young woman who wrote that letter is repentant because she not only sees how wretched her mistake was, she has not repeated her sin. That's true repentance. Her attitude toward God is to never again break his commandment against sex before marriage. Perhaps



she sees that she has sinned against her Creator even more than against herself and those closest to her. God stands ready to forgive all the sins of a person in that frame of mind.

But the second condition is to believe God, to believe that Jesus Christ's sacrifice of his very life is altogether sufficient to pay the penalty of your sins.

Some day, when this teenage girl is ready to make a real, lasting spiritual commitment in her life, she will have to come to complete reliance on the living Jesus Christ as her personal Savior. Every sin that she has ever committed will be completely forgiven by God, and she will be given the power of God's Holy Spirit to help her keep his laws.

God doesn't want us to have to suffer as this young woman has because of sin. That's why his commandments are there to protect us from hurting ourselves

provide her with a kind and understanding husband.

And, remember, there's no double standard with God. No young man who has carelessly cast his virginity aside can expect and insist that his wife should not have made a sexual mistake. God doesn't overlook sexual sins in young men while horribly punishing young women for the same sins. Women have just as much right to expect virginity in their future husbands as men do in their future wives.

No sin—no matter how ugly—will ever be held against you if you repent of it toward God. You can count on him. He will not withhold that forgiveness he has promised. When you really repent—and remember what the definition of repentance is—you are at that very moment forgiven.

## A Most Merciful Father

We have a most merciful heavenly Father, literally filled with the spirit of forgiveness (1 John 1:9).

So to that young woman who wrote in, and to all who have made similar mistakes, believe God's promises and know he wants more than anything to forgive you. He's more than willing to help us all straighten out the sordid messes we human beings bring on ourselves.

Don't allow past mistakes to keep you from pressing ahead to live your life as closely within God's laws as you are able, so that you may live the happy, successful life he has in mind for you. □



# Facing Loneliness

**"I** just need someone to talk to," she wrote.

She had suddenly found herself a part of that big, empty world of loneliness. She just needed a friend.



Why do so many of us feel all alone, friendless and discouraged? Why do we search for friendship and come up empty-handed? How should we go about gaining friendships?

Where should we turn to find the answers? Why not turn to someone who was "wiser than all men" (I Kings 4:31)?

And this man, King Solomon, gained his insight from God—the wisest being of all.

## A Book of Answers

God taught Solomon how to be happy by applying God's laws. And Solomon wrote this information down for us to use. That's why we can call the book of Proverbs a book of answers.

Let's find the solution to loneliness in a few of King Solomon's great sayings.

"A man who has friends must himself be friendly, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother" (Proverbs 18:24, *New King James Bible* throughout). The lesson is simple—if you want a friend, be a friend.

Try sending little notes once in a while just to let your friends know that you care. This will help keep your friendship alive.

The second half of this saying shows us how to *gain* a true friend. "But there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother." Who is closer than a brother? Someone who sticks with you when everyone else leaves. One way to find a friend is to find someone who needs a friend.

There are two ways of life—give and get. Give is the way of out-flowing love, helping without receiving or even expecting anything in return. Get is the way of take and receiving without real concern. To conquer loneliness, we must learn to *give* friendship. People who are sick, people who have no close relatives and people who are not popular have one thing in common—loneliness.

It doesn't have to be that way, though. You can help by giving your friendship to someone in

need. In this way, you not only solve your own problem of loneliness, you help someone else.

Solomon gives more wisdom in Proverbs 17:17, "A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for adversity."

When people leave us, they simply show that they weren't real, true friends.

One of the tricks to keeping friendships alive is to stick with your friends even in tough times. Stay close enough to let your troubled friend know you are available, and you'll keep him or her as a friend.

"He who covers a transgression seeks love, but he who repeats a matter separates the best of friends" (Proverbs 17:9). Solomon knew that one of the fastest ways to lose a friend is to gossip about his or her faults. What if your friend rejects you? While you're waiting for your friend to come back, do you tell everyone how bad he or she is? We all fall into this trap at times.

To cover a transgression means to forgive and forget about it. Some things *can* be let go and ignored. This will help us keep the friends we have.

## The Best Friend

There is a friend common to all of us, who is the ultimate example. He loves everyone constantly and has special concern for the underprivileged. He looks for the needs in everyone he sees and he doesn't leave his friends alone.

This great friend is the author of forgiveness and nobody can cover a sin like he can. Gossip? No way! He won't even remember other people's mistakes once they say they're sorry and change!

If you haven't guessed by now, that best friend of all friends is God. God is ready and willing to answer you when you ask him to help you and when you ask for his friendship.

If you'd like more information on how to get closer to our great Creator, and if you'd like to know what he has to offer you in the future, request our free booklets, *Does God Exist?* and *Why Were You Born?* □



**T**here he is. Oh, no. He's coming over here. He's going to sit down at my table.

Oh, no! He's going to say hi. I'm going to have to talk to him. OH, NO!

These were the thoughts running through Ellen's head as she watched the guy from her English class take a seat across from her at lunch. Her tongue glued itself to her teeth, and she couldn't think of anything to say. She smiled nervously and crumbled her bread onto her plate. She was shy.

"I am 15 years old," a letter read, "and I have this problem of being so shy and self-conscious about myself that I can't talk to people because I'm afraid I'll say something dumb or they won't like me... they just think I'm unfriendly and I don't like that." This person is also shy.

Shyness can be a real handicap that keeps you from doing the things you want to do. Shyness can give others a mistaken impression of your personality.

Shyness can also keep you from speaking up when you've been taken advantage of. If you're shy, you may be preoccupied with yourself, have feelings of loneliness and depression and a low self-image. Shy people can literally be afraid of other people.

How about you? Do you find yourself at a loss for words when you're with strangers? Do your knees shake and your palms get sticky when you give a speech or answer a question in class? Do you have trouble talking to members of the opposite sex? If so, guess what? Almost everyone else does too!

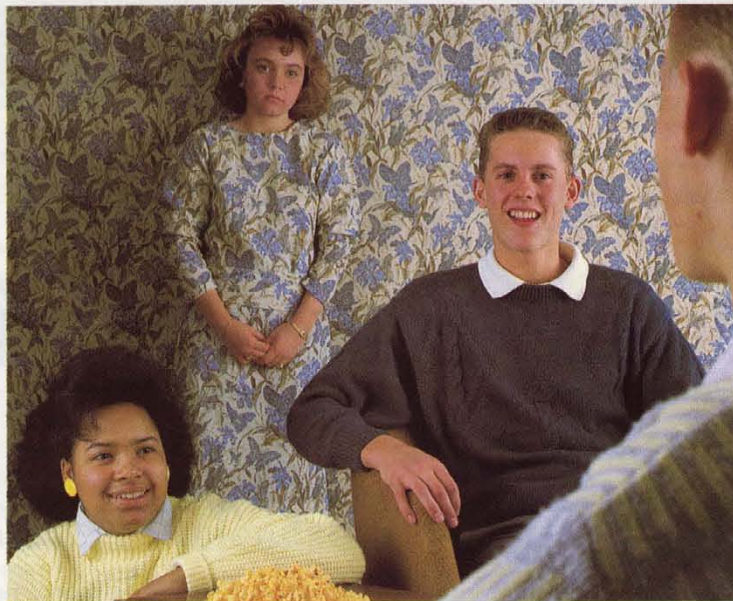
Since most people are shy at

one time or another (or all the time!), what can be done to lessen or overcome shyness?

First of all, don't put yourself down or brand yourself with labels like "stupid," "ugly" or "klutz." Look at your strengths more than your weaknesses.

Maybe you're a good listener (most shy people are), have a good sense of humor or are good in school or sports. Maybe you're reliable, loyal, honest and a hard

# "WHY Am I So Shy?"



worker. Work at developing your strengths and downplaying your weaknesses. Your own blend of traits makes you unique.

What if you only feel shy in certain situations, like talking to members of the opposite sex or dealing with someone in authority?

Before you face a situation in which you feel shy, figure out exactly what you want to say—write it down if necessary. Then rehearse it a couple of times and you're ready to go. Ask your teacher the question that has been bothering you. Talk to the new girl

in your class. Return the pair of slacks you bought that have a hole in them. You'll find that the more you do things that make you nervous, the easier it will become.

Next, observe people you think are outgoing and friendly. Talk to them, if you can manage it. Try imitating them until you have a feel for being outgoing.

Finally, ask God to help you overcome your shyness. Ask him to give you courage, and to help you focus on others. He will help you.

You may still wonder *what* to say to that girl or guy in the lunchroom or the clerk at the store that sold you defective goods.

The second one is pretty easy. "I bought this last week and when I got home I discovered it had a hole in it. May I exchange it, please?"

Then there's the first one. Not so easy, is it? Perhaps you can ask about a class assignment (I know it's old, but it does work), make a comment about the situation you're both in or give a sincere compliment. No matter what you say, be sure it's positive and sincere. And smile. I know you're wriggling with em-

barrassment inside, and you know it, but the other person doesn't need to.

Sure, there are times you'll still feel shy. But that's normal. Just don't let that shy feeling keep you from joining in with others. People can be scary, but they can also be scared. Chances are the person you're talking to is a little shy, too.

A world of new friends and experiences awaits you once you get past the tongue-tied-silly-putty-for-legs syndrome. Maybe I'll see you there. I'll be the one with the nervous smile. □





# How to Build Strong Friendships

*What hurts friendships, and what builds them up? Here's some practical advice.*

**“W**ith friends like that, who needs enemies?”

How many times have you heard a phrase like that describing a relationship in which colliding egos and clashing wills are destroying a friendship?

Still, people seek out relationships because God created in us a need for friends and companionship. Loneliness and isolation gnaw at those without friends.

Good friendships are integral parts of our lives. They have been called a mirror that reflects our moods and characteristics, strengths and weaknesses. The foundation of a strong friendship

is to be more concerned with others than with yourself. Outgoing concern—love—that’s what makes friends and helps you to keep them.

## **What Hurts Relationships**

In order to see how to build strong friendships, let’s look at the forces that work to destroy relationships and then examine the constructive building blocks.

First, we must be wary of jealousy. It erodes outgoing concern more than anything else. It’s suffocating to a friendship because it goes hand in hand with lust. Instead of caring and sharing, lust *gets* and *takes* advantage of

others, finally killing a relationship.

Another destructive factor is distrust. Distrust thwarts that closeness, openness and sharing so essential to friendship. Gossip and talebearing also quickly consume relationships.

You’ve probably been with people who seem to constantly run others down—sometimes even those they call their friends. It’s an easy habit to get into, but it can lead to some devastating results.

It irks me to hear that someone is saying bad things about me behind my back. Yes, I know, when that happens you should ignore it. “Sticks and stones may break my



bones, but words will never hurt me," goes the old saying. But it's hard to make people forget what others have said about you.

The Bible says that death and life are in the power of the tongue (Proverbs 18:21). Gossip, name-calling and slander erode relationships as quickly as fire consumes wood.

### Don't Overdo It

Perhaps you do avoid these destructive flaws, but still have trouble making or keeping friends. It could be that you're trying too hard.

If you are too accommodating (always agreeing with someone just to win his or her friendship), you are not being yourself, and the other person may feel you're covering up your own feelings.

True, we should take the initiative in beginning friendships. A man who has friends must show himself friendly, the Bible says. You will not make new friends by sitting around waiting for someone to coax you out of your apathy or shyness.

But it's important not to demand, grovel or pout in order to be liked. You can't rush into relationships, trying to make an impression.

Avoid trying to prove yourself and impress others. You'll find maintaining a few good, solid friendships is better than trying to impress an endless string of people. Steer clear of the too-few-friends, too-many-acquaintances syndrome.

Flattery won't help a relationship, either. Flattery is defined as "excessive praise given for ulterior motives."

A compliment, on the other hand, is "an expression of appreciation offered with sincerity, with no thought of personal gain." You can make a person feel good all day by saying a fitting word of honest praise or recognition, but flattery hurts because it is empty of true meaning.

Another vital ingredient for successful relationships is appreciative listening. This isn't just polite silence. It's an effective technique

called active listening, which is responding to others' comments in a way that lets them know you think their ideas, feelings and experiences are important. If you pay attention during a conversation, you will constantly be given clues about what to say.

Tact is important. So many times inappropriate words that you later regret slip out. It only takes a split second to revise a statement or question through your billions of brain cells.

### How You Say It

How can you use conversation to build a strong friendship? Good results can come from practicing the following seven steps:

1. Don't grab the conversation with "Yes, now take me, for instance. . . ." You know how irritating it is to hear someone who has to have the final word on everything, from aardvarks to zymurgy (a branch of applied chemistry that deals with the fermentation process).

2. Don't let your gaze wander from the other person's face, except momentarily. Give undivided attention.

3. Affirm the feelings of the other with praise, encourage-

ment, hope or just a nod. Sometimes, like when a friend is explaining a serious problem, it can be hard to find the right words. But a nod of encouragement goes a long way.

6. Try to feel what the other person feels by putting yourself in his or her place.

7. Don't argue!

I Corinthians 13 tells us to be positive about our friends by believing the best, not thinking evil and not rejoicing in iniquity (law-breaking).

Friendships need constant nurturing. Both partners must have a sense that one friend is not leaning or depending too much on the other and a sense that both are gaining from the relationship.

Disagreement is fine. If friends never have conflicting views (that doesn't mean quarreling), it could be a sign of apathy.

People with convictions will disagree. If two people share a deep bond of like-mindedness or affection, it will survive constructive argument.

By not expecting serenity every day, a friend avoids the dangers of boredom.

A budding friendship takes time and commitment from both parties if it's to become a fulfilling relationship. The hallmark of friendship is being more con-

## A budding friendship takes time and commitment if it's to become a fulfilling relationship.



ment, hope or just a nod. Sometimes, like when a friend is explaining a serious problem, it can be hard to find the right words. But a nod of encouragement goes a long way.

4. Don't interrupt.

5. Don't try to top the other person's story or joke. Remember, also, that it can be embarrassing

cerned with others than with yourself; remember, that's what makes friends.

Fame and fortune are relatively minor evidences of success. You'll be a truly successful person if you become a loving, giving individual, one who is constantly building friendships and trying to bring happiness to others. □



**E**

very week we get letters that say something like this:

"I used to have friends, but they don't like me anymore. They all call me names. I still like them, but they don't like me.

"Every day I go from table to table and sometimes they accept me, sometimes they don't. What can I do to make my 'friends' stop treating me like an enemy?"

I can sympathize with you. This problem is not just faced by teenagers.

Even in the adult world, we have to deal with people who don't want to be our friends, either from the start, or after a friendship has already been established.

#### What's the Cause?

"Why do people hate you one minute, then turn around and call you their best friend?" another reader writes.

There are many reasons friends become enemies.

Do you make better grades than

the guy who doesn't like you? Are you considered prettier than the girl who used to be your best friend? How about your house—is it bigger and nicer than your schoolmates'?

If jealousy and envy are the reasons your friends have become your enemies, those friends probably lack confidence and feel insecure.

They need friends, but are too self-conscious to let anyone they think is "better" get too close to them.

Another cause could be hurt feelings. Try to think back to see if at some time you caused them pain.

Did you insult them accidentally? Could you have hurt their feelings by gossiping about them? Usually, harmful gossip gets back to those it's about—and it's often exaggerated.

Prejudice against your nationality or race is also a possible reason.

In this case, the individual is in need of education. However,

chances are you will not be able to educate him or her. He or she needs to realize that God created each of us for a good reason, and none of us were accidents on God's part!

#### Misunderstandings

A simple misunderstanding could be the problem. Maybe your ex-friend thinks you gave him or her a dirty look, but actually, the sun was in your eyes!

Misunderstandings can be caused by something you said, something you did or something you didn't do.

Have you or your friends changed in some way? If you have gotten involved in some bad habits they don't approve of, they may not want to associate with you.

Or, if they are indulging in some questionable activities they know you wouldn't approve of, they may drop you as part of their group.

One girl in the seventh grade writes: "I have some friends that

# When Friends Let You Down

*What can you do when friends become enemies?*





smoke and take drugs. One day they offered some to me and I refused... now they don't think I'm cool."

If you're the problem—change. If they are, you're better off without them.

### What Can You Do?

Once we know why someone has become our enemy, we should be able to better deal with the problem.

Whatever the reason, how do you handle someone who obviously doesn't want to be your friend any longer?

Some people suggest we do what's done in the movies: Get even, get revenge or just hate back.

However, there is a better way. Here are a few suggestions on how to help change an enemy into a friend.

1. Be friendly. Regardless of others' antics, *continue* to be friendly. By returning anger for anger and hurt for hurt, the chances of saving the friendship are greatly reduced. Smile and speak when you see them, but don't push yourself on them.

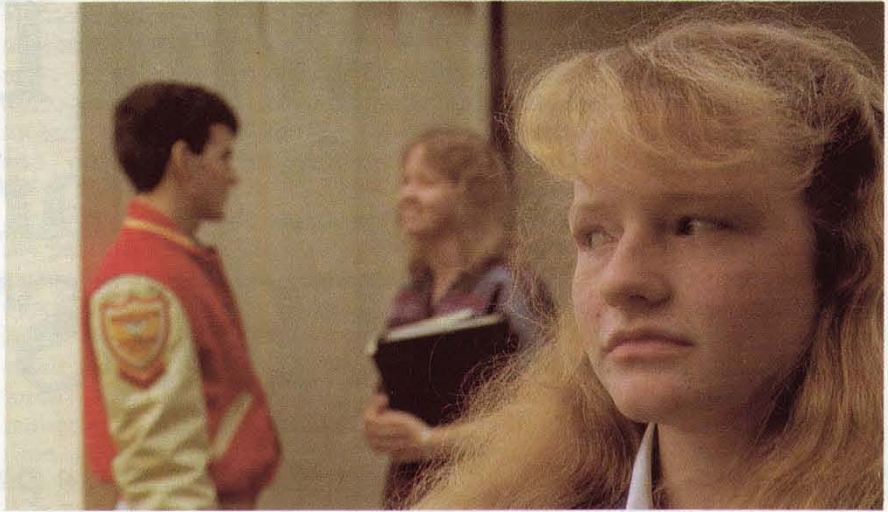
2. Talk to him (or her). Go right up to your ex-friend, just the two of you (you might embarrass the person in a group and make matters worse), and ask what you have done that he or she doesn't like.

Tell your ex-friend that you want to straighten out any problems between you.

Misunderstandings can grow out of control rapidly unless they are dealt with immediately. It can be painful to discuss the situation with a friend you're having problems with, but it will only get worse if you wait.

3. Think about his or her good qualities. Don't just dwell on what he has done to you or what's wrong with her. Be positive and consider the things he is better at than you. Compliment her sincerely when she excels at something.

4. Pray for your enemies. Matthew 5:44 says, "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate



## Some people suggest we get even, get revenge. However, there is a better way.

you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you" (*Authorized Version*).

God says this because it's no big deal for us to love those who love us back. But it is an especially difficult, and therefore character-building, deed for us to love our enemies.

### Build Other Friendships

Although we must love our enemies, we shouldn't worry about our problems with them all the time.

We should use our time and efforts in more constructive ways, such as building other friendships, developing our skills and helping other people.

Realize that sometimes you may be looking to the wrong crowd for friends.

Ask yourself why you want to be friends with the people who hurt you so much. Is it because they are the most popular kids in school? If so, that doesn't necessarily mean they'd make the best friends for you.

Look around. You may find other people who are being shunned just as you are. And you

can be sure they'd like a friend as much as you would. Perhaps you might find some common interests and strike up some friendships that turn your attention away from those who seem to hate you.

If the teens who are giving you trouble see that their reactions don't bother you anymore, they'll probably leave you alone. Hassling you will no longer be any fun for them. And even if they don't quit, it probably won't hurt so much if you have other friends to turn to.

And there's another thing to consider. A lot of successful people started out by using much of their time and energy developing their talents and skills while they were your age.

A person who has set a goal and is working diligently to achieve it has little time to worry about some "friends" who aren't being friendly.

Realize that not everyone is going to like us in this world. This will be especially true if we are trying to do what's right in God's sight. Regardless of that, we must do all that we can to maintain peace. □



**K**rista gulped down her lunch, hoping she could flee to the rest room before anyone asked her the question she was dreading.

But suddenly Beth interrupted the discussion of Sandi's party to blurt out, "Hey, Krista, what are you going to wear?"

Krista's stomach churned as she mumbled, "I can't go."

"Why not?" asked Beth.

"My parents won't let me."

"You're kidding! What's their problem?" Beth persisted.

"I don't know. They just won't let me." Krista grabbed her books and left. She wasn't hungry now and didn't want to finish the conversation.

But she didn't get away in time to keep from hearing Suzanne say, "Boy, sounds like her parents don't trust her!"

She sure hit the nail on the head, thought Krista as she ran outside. Why don't they trust me? I haven't even done anything wrong!

#### **It Doesn't Seem Fair**

It really didn't seem fair. All her school friends had been allowed to date as soon as anyone asked them. Krista couldn't do anything but listen to secondhand accounts of movie dates and dances.

Her parents wouldn't even let her go to nearby basketball games on the school bus with her girl friends. All they would let her do was go to activities put on by families in her church.

They were fun, but they sure were tame compared to what she heard her school friends reporting. She suspected the stories she heard were exaggerated, but she'd give anything to be able to go, even just once, just to see what she was missing.

What *is* their problem? she wondered forlornly as she

**It can be hard when it seems like your parents don't trust you.**

# "Why Don't My Parents TRUST ME?"

*Why are some parents so restrictive?  
Is it lack of trust?*

walked home alone that afternoon. She just couldn't face her friends on the bus.

As Krista kept walking and thinking, though, it occurred to her that it was possible her parents did trust her after all. Maybe there was some other reason for the way they treated her.

#### **Why Restrictions?**

Krista was on the right track. There are lots of reasons parents restrict their kids. Many of these have nothing at all to do with trusting them or not.

Some of these reasons are careful-

ly guarded secrets. For example, Jennifer has no idea her mother was assaulted by a boy she had dated only twice when she was 14. She never told anyone, and she is terrified that it could happen to her daughter.

Dale's grandparents were suspicious people. They didn't trust anybody, even their own kids, so Dale's dad didn't learn much about trust. He simply doesn't know how to trust Dale.

Elaine's dad won't let her date because his goal when he was a teenager was to seduce nearly every girl in school. He succeeded with quite a few.

He is convinced that all teenage boys are like





that, and he isn't about to let any young punk act like that with HIS daughter!

In contrast, Kevin's parents grew up peacefully enough, but several of their friends have kids who are taking drugs, drinking a lot and having illegitimate babies. They want to guard Kevin from these problems.

Jennifer, Dale, Elaine and Kevin have done nothing to deserve suspicion, but they are treated as if they did. They are paying the price for the irresponsible or dangerous deeds of others. But not everyone is an innocent victim. Some kids have caused their own problems.

For example, Amber's parents reluctantly allowed her to attend a school basketball game with three girl friends. She promised them she wouldn't leave the gym. But then she decided, on the spur of the moment, to take off for a few minutes with her favorite fellow and a few other kids to get a burger. How could she know they'd be pulled over by the police? Still her parents found out she broke her promise.

Other kids have stayed out too late, or come home, maybe just once, smelling of beer.

### Building Trust

These are just a few of the reasons parents may not seem to trust their kids. The list might seem long, but there is hope. The points below have helped many young people build more trusting relationships with their parents.

**1. Talk to your parents** about your feelings. Give them the chance to share their own experiences and fears. Their reasons won't always make sense to you, but try to look at things from their point of view. After all, this is a matter of their feelings about something quite precious to them—YOU—and feelings don't always make sense.

Once things are out in the open, your parents may reconsider and give you more freedom or work out a compromise. Even if nothing changes, when you understand why things are the way they are, it's easier.

**2. Earn their trust.** If you have

always kept your word and been reliable in the past, don't stop now. In asking for more freedom, you can point to your good record. Observe all family rules and don't make promises you can't keep.

If you have made mistakes in the past, this is the time to apologize, again if necessary. Show your parents you really are changing. A good way to begin is to ask for small chances to prove yourself totally reliable in honoring their requests, no matter what. As time goes on, their trust will grow.

**3. Appreciate their concern.** Only parents who care about their kids bother to set rules and limits.

Jack would be happy to hear his parents express any opinion at all about what he does. The fact is, he seldom sees them. They both work long hours

party you're missing. It means accepting your parents' decision willingly, and cheerfully following their wishes.

**5. Be patient** when you don't like what your parents say.

Even if nothing changes right now, in just a few months or years you will be grown and on your own. You'll be making your own decisions while you enjoy the long life you have earned by honoring your parents.

Talk to your parents about your feelings and listen to what they have to say.



## Your parents' trust will grow if you try to follow these points.

and on their rare evenings at home they are so tired, busy or both that there isn't much point in trying to talk to them. They give Jack money and a car to use, but he would rather have their attention.

**4. Respect them.** They do have your best interests at heart, and between them they have dozens of years more experience with human nature and temptations than you do.

Respect them even if you think they're wrong. The commandments promise long life to those who honor their parents. This doesn't mean sulking in your room while you think about the

Krista took a chance and tried some of these ideas. She talked to her parents, respectfully and patiently, and tried to help them understand her feelings.

Her parents appreciated hearing how she felt and helped her see the importance of their high standards and values.

This talk cleared the air and helped Krista feel loved and appreciated again. By the time Monday rolled around she was even a little sad for her friends when she heard the party hadn't gone so well.

These steps worked for her. Why don't you give them a try with your parents? □



**Q** My dad remarried not long ago. My problem is that now my dad shows more attention to his new wife and to my stepbrothers than he does to me. This makes me feel unloved and unwanted.

**A** We understand how you feel, but we think

your dad probably loves you and wants you as much as ever, even if you don't feel like he does right now.

If your father is neglecting you a bit, it could be that he is merely trying to focus his attention for now on the new members of his family so they will know that they are wanted and loved. In doing so, he may be unconsciously neglecting you. If so, it is no doubt unintentional and will probably shift back around when he feels the new members respond well to him.

On the other hand, maybe your dad is giving everyone attention, but—compared with the time when you had him all for yourself—it just seems like you are being ignored. If so, try to understand.

Either way, we suggest that you talk with him about your feelings. Be sure to pick a time when he is not rushed or troubled by some problem. Listen carefully to his answer and see if it is one of the possibilities stated here.

Most likely your talk will help both him and you deal with the many problems a new family faces upon remarriage of a parent. Problems such as these are common and can be solved with time and understanding.

**Q** My teenage brother and I fight all the time. Most of our arguments are just minor spats, but occasionally we both get very upset. How can I get my brother to treat me better?

**A** Most of the time the way to get people to treat us better is to treat them better. Generally people tend to treat us the way we treat them. Of-

ten we treat our closest relatives badly, and they treat us badly, because we know them so well that we relax and don't make a real effort to be polite.

More specifically, many brother-sister spats are caused by one person being overly selfish by wanting

most vocal and disrespectful. The parents then often will see that the disrespectful teen deserves more punishment even than the ones who started the problem. The disrespectful teen only remembers who was at fault to begin with and feels it's unfair, while all the parents care

## QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

his or her way no matter how it affects the other. The other senses this and responds the same way.

Some who see this tendency for selfishness in themselves and others will truly try to be kind but get discouraged when it doesn't change the other person right away. But be patient and realize that kindness takes time to work. And even if it doesn't seem to work at all, being kind is still the best way to live, and will bring you the most happiness in the long run.

**Q** My problem is that my parents always blame me for things that my brother or two sisters actually do. Then they get angry at me when I try to explain that I'm not at fault. Why is this?

**A** It certainly could be upsetting to be constantly blamed unjustly. You asked why this happens, so let's look at some possible rea-

sons. First, examine the possibility that you don't get *all* the blame, although it may sure seem like it sometimes. Many, many young people feel singled out and picked on, but later find out that their brothers and sisters also felt unjustly blamed much of the time.

But maybe you really are being singled out too often. Sometimes it happens like this: A teenager is not involved in starting a problem, but when the parents step in, perhaps the teen becomes the

about is who is the problem when they step in.

Another possibility is that you now are usually innocent, but in the past you were often the one who was at fault. If so, perhaps your parents still jump to the conclusion you are wrong.

How can you solve this? As they continue to see your changed behavior, they'll eventually recognize that you *have* changed. It will take patience and a positive attitude.

Consider one more possibility: Maybe you have been at fault, but are unwilling to recognize your mistake. Take a hard look at yourself and see if this might not be so.

At any rate, take comfort that although we all sometimes get blamed when we don't deserve it, we usually get much mercy we don't deserve also. And, in time, we all receive the results of our actual behavior, no matter who got the blame in the short term (Galatians 6:7, 9). □

## FAMILY

Some of the most challenging relationships are found in the home. How do you deal with brothers and sisters, parents and stepfamilies?



# FAMILY CONFLICT

## What You Can Do About It

*What can you do if your home has become a battleground?*

**W**hen parents fight, some kids hide in their bedrooms, trying to pretend they are asleep and don't hear the shouting.

Others try to stay away from their troubled homes as much as possible.

According to child psychologist Antoinette Saunders, hearing their parents argue is the most stressful experience in the lives of young people today.

Not many years ago few were aware of childhood stress. It is now becoming a common problem.

It's sad, but true. Many families today are not happy. Painful divorces are affecting large numbers of families in the Western world, especially the United States.

Often, the years leading up to divorce are filled with yelling and fighting. And, even though divorce is more common now than ever, many families in conflict stay together in spite of constant battles.

Since that is the condition in many Western nations, dealing with conflict, tensions and stress in the family is a stark reality many teenagers must face.

If such conflict is not part of your life, how blessed you are.

But how can you deal with family turmoil if it does affect you? Or how can you be of help to a troubled friend?

### Understanding the Problem

If you feel there is a problem in your home, step No. 1 is to really understand just how severe the problem is.

In most homes there will be occasional disagreements over various subjects such as how to spend money, where to go on vacation, how to discipline the

children or who is going to clean out the garage. In some families these discussions might even get a little heated. This does not mean that the marriage is about to disintegrate, though, or that Dad is going to hit Mom.

If the problem is not a big one, don't blow it out of proportion.

On the other hand, a home where shouting, cursing, yelling and even hitting are a way of life, the problem is indeed severe.

In such cases, the family needs help.

But in far too many cases, the parents won't seek help. The problems often go from bad to worse.



### What Not to Do

First, here's what NOT to do. Don't run away from the problem. Running away from home won't solve anything. Yet it is what thousands of teenagers do



every year. You will not generally find life any easier out on your own—more often than not young people who choose this course of action end up quitting school and messing up their own lives in a number of other ways.

And please don't turn to drugs and alcohol for escape. There is no real comfort in drugs—only heartache and misery in their wake. They seem to offer peace of mind and comfort—a way to forget

sisters. In other cases, perhaps the shock that you call it to their attention will help them on the road to solutions.

There are times when children who love both parents can contribute to stability in their family in this way.

There is even a chance *by your example* your parents might see that if they don't solve their problems, others in the family will suffer greatly.



about all of your problems. But troubles are only doubled with drugs and alcohol. They don't solve the family problem and they create new ones for you.

It's important to realize that it's not your fault if your parents don't get along. There is an almost instinctive feeling of guilt many young people get. This is especially true if parents divorce. Children may suffer more than the parents—often they feel they are to blame.

It's simply not your fault. Some parents have severe problems to solve—sometimes you may help solve the problem, but if they are unable or unwilling, you can't feel guilty. You have your own life to live and future to plan. There's no need to cloud it with depression and guilt.

Another thing—don't take sides with either parent. Children are far too often caught in the middle of conflict. The parents must solve their problems, and if you side with one, it may only complicate the matter.

So what should you do when family problems are severe? (Remember, if the problem is not a big one, don't make it one.)

Perhaps, after a great deal of prayer on your part, you could calmly ask for a chance to sit down and discuss your family life with both parents. Suggest a private, comfortable place and a time when no one feels hurried.

In some cases, your parents might not realize the impact their fights have on you or your brothers and

#### Where Can You Turn?

What about when you feel you've got to have someone to talk to? A friend your own age or slightly older will usually not be able to offer much in the way of solutions.

If you have an adult friend you know and respect, he or she can be of much greater help. Perhaps there's a minister who really wants to help, a teacher at school who you know will understand or maybe you can contact a professional counselor who will be able to guide you in planning a course of action.

Of course, you don't have to tell everyone you meet. Remember to consider your parents' privacy and confidentiality.

If the situation is so bad that your safety or the safety of one parent is at stake, you might have to move in with your grandparents or another relative while your parents sort out their problem. This is not running away, but could emphasize to your parents that the problem has to be solved, or many lives will be affected.

Finally, love and honor your parents, in spite of their problems. No one is perfect. We are living in trying times. Under stress, far too many parents have turned to alcohol or drugs. Tempers are sometimes short and flare up.

But, in spite of all this, many people are coming to grips with their problems. Many are finding the help to solve them.

Your example of love and respect, even if not in the best of circumstances, can be a great help to your family.

You have your own life to live, however, and whether or not your parents get hold of their own problems, you must press on. If you don't let anything stop you from achieving your hopes and dreams, your parents will be able to gain happiness from your success. Someday it will mean a lot to them.

Even if you don't have a stable home life, God doesn't set you adrift alone. You can turn to him for stability and comfort. He will be a loving Father to us when we turn to him. To learn what God wants for you, send for our free booklet, *Why Were You Born?* Addresses are on the back cover. □



**“I** have been told that I have little self-confidence and a poor self-image. I know that I should love the body that God has given me, but I don’t know how.”

The writer of this letter is not alone. Most people aren’t completely happy with the way they look.

### Jokes That Hurt

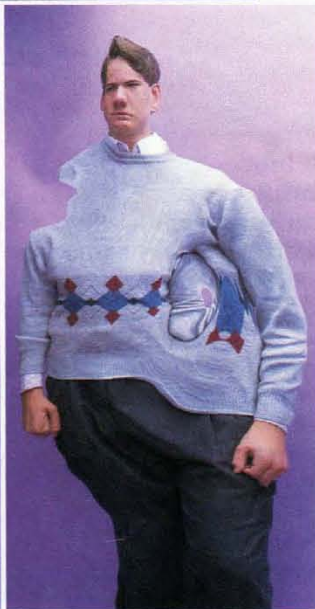
When did it start? Was it when the other kids in elementary school made jokes about your nose, how tall (or short) you were, your weight or your complexion? Maybe you laughed along with them, but deep inside it hurt. And it left a lasting impression.

If only we looked like the “beautiful people,” we would have it made. But we realize we can’t look like them, so we might as well give up—we’ll never be accepted.

Why does everyone judge looks so highly? Are looks really that important? Not to God they aren’t. He says he judges by what’s on the inside—to him, what you think is far more important than what you look like. Let’s see an example of this in the Bible.

God’s prophet, Samuel, was told to go to a certain house and there he would find the man God wanted to be the next king. When Samuel got there and saw Eliab, he was sure he had found the one. Eliab was a tall and handsome man, someone who looked powerful enough to rule a kingdom.

“But the Lord said to Samuel, ‘Do not look at his appearance or at the height of his stature, because I have refused him. For the Lord does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the



sions, some things about our appearance we can and should do something about. We can improve our posture and shape up with healthful diet and exercise.

Selecting clothing and hairstyles becoming to our bodies also helps. Being scrupulously clean and eating a well-balanced diet add to overall health, and improve the complexion. Trying to cover up blemishes with cosmetics only adds to complexion problems.

But, some things you can’t change, so it’s probably best to get your mind off of them. Others don’t think about what you consider your physical limitations nearly so often as you do. Besides, they are probably too busy worrying that you will notice their problems!

Also, since you know what it’s like to be teased about your looks, be careful not to offend others. Why not make it a practice to compliment others?

The truth about beauty or good looks is—what you see is not always what you get. The trick is in looking for the gold in other people, and in developing some of your own. Here are some tips on how you can become a beautiful

## “I Don’t Like the Way I Look”

heart’ ” (I Samuel 16:7, *New King James Bible*).

### Real Beauty

True beauty, then, isn’t only skin deep. Real beauty actually comes from within!

A radiant smile and friendly, outgoing personality add beauty to a face that, with a frown, might be considered plain. A positive attitude and willingness to do what we can to improve our appearance can make a real difference.

Along with our facial expres-

ful person all the way through.

- Be dependable.
- Have a little self-control. Don’t speak out of turn; learn not to get angry quickly.
- Share some of your time and talents with less fortunate people.
- Work at being understanding. Put yourself in others’ shoes.
- Be friendly. “Love your enemies” (Matthew 5:44).
- Tell the truth, but try not to hurt feelings when you do.

Most of all, love God and seek his help in everything. □



**T**hose unsettling questions keep coming up. Here you are, going through your teen years. You're headed toward... headed toward...

Headed toward what?

Maybe you are aware that this world—that is to say, this present society—is coming to a close. You and a lot of your friends suspect this—just from what you hear in the news. Nations keep hating each other and building incredibly deadly weapons to wipe each other out. Someday those weapons are bound to be used.

Perhaps, too, you are familiar with some of the prophecies of the Bible that tell the good news that Jesus Christ is going to return to this earth to stop human beings from completely destroying all life on this planet. When he returns, those who are converted Christians will be changed into spirit beings to help rule the peaceful and wonderful world tomorrow.

That's great!

For them. But what about you? What about your fellow teens who want to live God's way, but who are not yet ready for baptism and real conversion? What's going to happen to you if the "end" comes before you are old enough to experience true repentance leading to conversion? What will happen to you if World War III starts before you reach that point?

And after Jesus Christ is here on earth, what will you be doing then?

Of even more immediate concern, what should you do until then? Look forward to marriage and having a home of your own anyhow? Plan a career? If so, what kind?

Or should you just kill time, wait it out, figuring what's the use getting anything started—especially with all the unemployment and economic problems in the world today? What does the future hold for you?

Let's think about these things.

### **A Bright Future!**

Actually, if you are a young person sincerely trying to learn about and live God's way to the best of

# Plan for the Future? How? Why?

*What will you be doing five or 10 years from now? Considering this troubled world, in which direction should you steer your life?*

your ability, you do not have to worry about the future in any way. For you the future is bright, thrilling and full of exciting promise!

If the terrible times of world trouble and nuclear war that will take place before the return of Jesus Christ come while you are still a young person, God will protect you. He will set powerful angels to watch over you. Sounds like make-believe, doesn't it? But don't be fooled. It's real!

Many are going to realize too late that it's real. They will have to experience some terrible times and take their chances that they will be among those who manage to survive. But if you are obeying God, the Bible promises "a thousand may fall at your side, and ten thousand at your right hand; but it shall not come near you... No evil shall befall you... for He shall give His angels charge over you, to keep you in all your ways" (Psalm 91:7-11, *New King James Bible*).

Finally, just in the nick of time, Jesus Christ will return to earth at the sound of a great trumpet. The converted saints will be changed into spirit beings. (More details are given in our booklet, *The World Won't End This Way!* Send for a free copy—the addresses are listed on the back cover.)

But what if this happens before you are old enough or mature enough to be converted? What will you do then as a physical young person? You will have opportunities unlimited!

### **One of the Pioneers**

Remember that the world will be in ruins. The cities destroyed. Highways, electrical lines, railways, bridges, means of communication, distribution of food and merchandise—it will all be at a standstill. It will be time to start a new and better civilization. And you will be one of the pioneers. You will be one of the select group of human beings on earth who know God and his ways. You and other young people like you will be the physical leaders of this new age.

People who will have survived the end of this age without knowing God will want to learn God's ways. And you and other young people who were protected by God will be among the ones to teach them and show them how to live happy lives. (That, by the way, is one reason you need to learn as much now as you can about God's way of life—so you know enough about it to be able to show others!)

Think how good it will feel to help make the lives of other peo-



ple happy and to be happy yourself. Of all the many human beings on the earth, you and others like you who have a head start in knowing God will be the ones God will use to direct the rebuilding of the world.

It won't be all work, though. There will be plenty of opportunity for recreation and fun. You will be able to be happily married and have a family and home of your own. You will be able to raise your children in a world of peace where even animals that are now wild will be tame.

Peace will be everywhere. You won't have to worry about crime, pollution, unemployment, sickness, war. Such things will not be a problem in the world tomorrow that you can have a part in building.

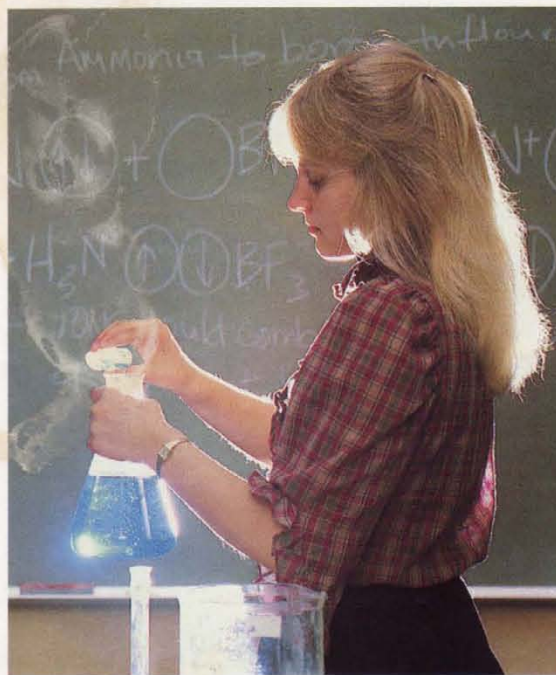
And then, after you've lived a full life as a human being, your physical life will come to an end. But that won't matter. You too will then become a spirit being like those who were changed at Christ's return. You will live forever, having great power, being able to travel beyond the speed of light. You will then share in developing and managing the entire universe!

#### As Far as You Can

But what about today? What should you do until this age comes to a close? The answer in a few words is: Live as normally as you possibly can under the circumstances.

Jesus said that when he returns, he is going to reward those he finds busy "doing" (Matthew 24:46). He's not going to reward those who learned the end of the age was coming and who just threw up their hands and said: "What's the use of trying? I'll just wait it out."

He wants to find us "doing," busily involved, developing whatever talents and aptitudes we have been given. Go ahead and plan a career or a vocation, if that's what you would like to do.



PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE may seem chancy, but even if this present age should end before you're able to complete your goals, your efforts won't be wasted.



**“Go ahead. Dare to dream and plan.”**

So what if time should get cut short before you graduate from college—or even high school. Go as far as you can. You will have lost nothing. You need have nothing to regret providing God's laws have been your guidelines. You will have developed character and learned valuable lessons that you will find useful after Christ's return, if not before.

In thinking about a vocation or career, however, be sure to consider those fields that offer some realistic promise of employ-

ment in this society. Because of factors such as automation, economic conditions and foreign trade problems, many careers are no longer promising or else they have become overcrowded and hard to enter.

In the United States, experts advise that the best opportunities now lie in the fields dealing with information (which today means combining computers with just about any other field) and the service industry (doing things for other people). But read up on it. Ask your librarian for help. Check the employment situation where you live so you don't get stuck in a dead-end vocation. There are still plenty of opportunities out there for go-getters.

#### Dare to Dream

Marriage? A family? A home of your own? Go ahead. Dare to dream and plan. Set goals. Strive to make something out of what time there is. God will help you and bless your efforts according to his will.

And if you don't attain all your goals before this age is over, then you will have all the advantages of the world tomorrow. If you're on God's side, you see, you can't lose either way!

The future belongs to you! Take advantage of it, plan and think big. □





# A Teenager Is Challenged— DOES GOD EXIST?

**N**ow that's about the strangest question a minister has ever asked me, I thought.

Here I was, a 19 year old who had attended church for years, and now when I approached a minister about an important, serious subject, he asked me the simplest of questions, "Do you believe God exists?"

"Of course I do!" I answered.

"Why do you believe that?" he persisted.

"Well . . . you know," I nervously replied, caught off guard. "You can't have life without a Lifegiver, creation means there had to be a Creator, matter hasn't always existed and all the other things that prove God exists."

"That's right," he said. "But what is it deep down inside you that makes you have an unshakable conviction that God exists? What is it that gives you a real, personal relationship with him?"

After a few minutes of silent consideration, I was forced to admit something very humiliating: "I guess I really don't know how to explain that."

This was not proceeding the way it was supposed to. I had attended church and studied doctrines and scriptures, yet I couldn't even convincingly explain why I knew God existed. I knew he did, but why did I know? How real was God to me?

## **You Can Know!**

How real is God to you? Can you know he exists? Can you be close to God? Yes, you can. You don't have to be an adult, be in college or be a certain age. But you do have to work and think.

You can read all you want about God, accept what you read and even memorize it—but that won't necessarily make you close to God or make God real to you!



That's what my minister was trying to get across to me. He knew, and showed me, that I had only memorized the proofs that God exists.

I had believed it, accepted it, had no questions about it, but it was much like believing and accepting that man has walked on the moon or that there is a country named China.

Yes, there are factual proofs you can read about concerning God's existence, but those proofs need to become living reality to you.

How? By making those proofs something you see in life around you—through the experiences you have—rather than just something you read about.

You might say, "Sure, God would be real to me if I was dying and he instantly healed me when I prayed, but I've never been in that situation."

There are teens who have had prayers dramatically answered, and yours can be, too, but do you have to wait for some great event to come along before establishing a deeper understanding of God?

#### **A Little Wild Flower**

No, it doesn't take a dramatic event or earthshaking experience to make God real to you. Believe it or not, a tiny, purple wild flower taught me the reality of God's existence.

A couple of weeks after talking with the minister I took a walk out into a field to think. I had prayed before I went out, asking God to help me somehow become more grounded in the knowledge of his existence.


Absentmindedly I picked a little wild flower, intending to chew on the stem. Instead, I began examining it closely. The more I looked at it, the more amazed I was.

That little flower was pretty, but more than that, it was highly complicated in its construction. Tiny veins held each little transparent petal together. It was so fragile, yet perfectly formed. Only a half inch across, it was intricately and flawlessly designed.

Thoughts slowly began to form and expand. "Hey, look at all the other life right here as well." I began

to mentally examine the other plants, the grass, the trees, the insects, the animals and then, above all, I began to consider the human body and the human brain, that fantastic computer that was allowing me to think in the first place!

One thought led to another and finally to a conclusion: The harmony of the life systems on this planet could not just have accidentally happened.



## **You can see proofs of God's existence in action around you if you look for them.**

Now it became crystal clear, because I was personally examining it, why the creation has to have a Creator.

In the days that followed, the reality of God deepened in my mind. Romans 1:20 was suddenly so clear: "For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead" (*Authorized Version*).

It took an in-depth observation of a little wild flower to trigger a whole series of thoughts in my mind. By looking at the things that are made, I began to understand the invisible things of God in a way I had never seen them before.

Of course this does not mean everyone should go rushing out into the nearest pasture to gaze at wild flowers. That is what helped me, but only because of a certain frame of mind I was in. Different things will affect different people in different ways at different times.

#### **See the Proofs in Action**

What you can do, however, is become very aware of life around

you and see how the proofs of God's existence really do relate to you.

Maybe you live on a farm. The next time you see a calf born, take time to think about that. A few months before, that calf was not visible to the naked eye. Can that life have come from nonlife?

Maybe you have a telescope or can look through one on a field trip to a planetarium. As you look into the heavens, ask yourself about the design of what you're viewing, how it is sustained, the laws governing the astral bodies, the uniqueness of earth. How did it all happen?

Maybe you're studying physics or experimenting in biology. Don't approach it merely as a class assignment. Connect those physical laws you see at work, that caterpillar you see change into a beautiful butterfly, those frogs you dissect—with a greater question. Did this just happen? Was it accidental? Did it just evolve?

Maybe your interest lies in computers. Think about how fascinating these machines are. But understand as well that the most complex computer is still greatly inferior to man's brain. Tie that in with the thought that man has never been able to create anything that is superior to himself. Then ask yourself if you believe that any power or force of less intelligence than your mind produced you!

If you take time to really look at life, you can see proofs in action around you. They become *living* proofs. God becomes more real to you.

You'll find that when God is more real to you, you'll draw closer to him in your prayer, your Bible study and your observance of his way of life.

Whether you are 13 or 18, you can prove God exists—and you can prove it so deeply to yourself that you will always hold fast to the belief and nothing will ever shake it. To help you, we'd like to offer you our free booklet *Does God Exist?* Addresses are on the back cover. □