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101 QUESTIONS PEOPLE ASK AN EVANGELIST

By Forrest McCullough

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A PICTURE OF THE AUTHOR

As hdm0921.jpg, a picture of Forrest McCullough is included with this publication.

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BACK COVER TEXT

Rev. Forrest McCullough, of Tennessee, is a well-known evangelist in the Church of the Nazarene and speaker on the weekly radio program "The Heartwarming Hour." He recently won prominence also for his production of the popular recording "Flight Final."

In his extensive travels to every area of the country his counsel on spiritual matters has been earnestly sought by hundreds of seekers, and in this small volume he has sought to bring together the questions he is most frequently asked. His answers are not meant to be exhaustive, but they do offer helpful guidance to those who are plagued by these common concerns.

* * * * *

PREFACE

Interested people ask questions.

In this book I answer some of the thousands of questions that have come to me from sincere inquirers. Because of limited space, only the questions most vital to spiritual life have been considered, and the answers made as brief as possible.

It is my prayer that these answers will be more than my opinion, but that God will make them His answer for many earnest readers.

I gladly dedicate this book to all who have asked me questions through the mail, in personal conversation, and at the altar. May you receive as much enjoyable profit from reading as I have from writing.

Forrest McCullough

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CONTENTS

1
Salvation

2
Holiness

3
Prayer

4
Christian Living

5
Christian Practices

6
Right and Wrong

7

The Home

8

The Hereafter

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01 -- QUESTIONS ON SALVATION

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QUESTION ONE

Can a person know he is saved? If so, how can he know?

ANSWER:-- An emphatic yes to the first part of this question. It would be neither scriptural nor reasonable to assume that one must be satisfied with a "hope so" Christian experience, And God is never unreasonable in His plans or demands. There are four witnesses or evidences that testify to our salvation.

1. God's Word. "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (I John 1:9). Therefore we know that, if we have confessed, He does forgive, because His Word says so and He cannot lie (Titus 1:2; Num. 23:19). If this were the only evidence, that would be sufficient. God's Word is a sure Foundation for unshakable faith.

2. Our own hearts. "Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God" (I John 3:21).

The word "heart" means the inner self where you may have a consciousness, an awareness, a certainty, that you are doing nothing displeasing to God; also that you are not refusing anything that the Holy Spirit has directed.

3. The Holy Spirit. "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God" (Rom. 8:16).

4. A new life. "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (II Cor. 5:17). If you qualify in these four tests, especially 1., remember that it is Satan who tempts you to doubt your Christian experience and tries to plant a seed of doubt in your mind and thereby discourage you. When the devil whispers doubts, resist him steadfastly. Read Jas. 4:7 and I Pet. 5:9.

* * *

QUESTION TWO

Who can be saved?

ANSWER:-- "Whosoever believeth" (John 3:16).

"Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord" (Acts 2:21).

"Who will have all men to be saved" (I Tim. 2:4).

"Not willing that any should perish" (II Pet. 3:9).

"Whosoever will" (Rev. 22:17).

* * *

QUESTION THREE

What must I do to be saved?

ANSWER:-- There are three simple steps to salvation:

1. Confess your sins (I John 1:9).
2. Forsake your sins (Prov. 28:13).
3. By faith receive Christ as your Saviour (Acts 16:31).

* * *

QUESTION FOUR

Is it necessary to make a public confession of one's sins?

ANSWER:-- The confession should be as public as the deed. When a group is sinned against, the group must be asked to forgive. If an individual has been wronged, confession must be there, If God alone has been sinned against, the confession should be made to Him alone (Matt. 5:24).

* * *

QUESTION FIVE

You say that Christ loved us and was willing to die for us -- why then did He pray, when facing death, "If it be possible, let this cup pass from me"?

ANSWER:-- Jesus was both human and divine. He was the Son of Man and the Son of God. Being human, He shrank from the physical suffering facing Him. However, He was willing to become "obedient unto death, even the death of the cross" (Phil. 2:8), that He might redeem us -- because He loved us. The glorious fact is that He did give himself for us.

* * *

QUESTION SIX

Can a person be delivered from sin in this life?

ANSWER:-- Certainly! Otherwise Christ's coming, suffering, and death were all in vain. The devil brought sin into the world, and if God is not able to get rid of sin, then the devil is bigger than God. "He that committeth sin is of the devil . . . For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil. Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin" (I John 3:8-9).

* * *

QUESTION SEVEN

What is sin?

ANSWER:-- John Wesley defined sin as "a willful transgression against a known law of God." This means that there must be knowledge of wrongdoing, or of refusing to obey God, before sin is committed. Mistakes are not sin.

* * *

QUESTION EIGHT

Are men who die in the service of our country saved?

ANSWER:-- Not unless they have been born again (John 3:3-5).

* * *

QUESTION NINE

When does a child come to the age of accountability?

ANSWER:-- When a child knows the difference between right and wrong and is able to choose one or the other, he is accountable. The age varies according to the religious training and the child's ability to comprehend.

* * *

QUESTION TEN

Does a person have to be baptized to be saved?

ANSWER:-- There is no merit or salvation in baptism. It is a ceremony symbolizing one's death to sin and resurrection to spiritual life. A Christian should be baptized at his first opportunity after conversion. However, should a converted person die before having the opportunity to be baptized, he would not be lost. A good illustration of this is the thief on the cross.

* * *

QUESTION ELEVEN

Can a person who was once saved ever be lost?

ANSWER:-- Most certainly! The fact that a saved person can backslide and lose his Christian experience is clearly taught in numerous scriptures. Fellowship with God and the cleansing of the blood of Christ are conditional upon our walking in the light (I John 1:7). Our free choice brings us to Christ, and the same freedom may separate us from Him. The Bible speaks of people whose names will be blotted out of the book of life (Rev. 3:5; Ps. 69:28). Heb. 6:4-6 tells of those who were "once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come." Yet after all this, God says that it is possible for them to "fall away" and never be renewed. A backslider can come back to God, but not all do, and some will be lost who once walked the Christian way. Paul feared lest, "when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway" (I Cor. 9:27). What a solemn warning this is to us all! We must not only begin this race, but we must continue to the end (Luke 9:62).

* * *

QUESTION TWELVE

Was Judas ever saved?

ANSWER:-- It would seem so. Jesus trusted him as the treasurer of the disciples, and He would not have done so if Judas had not been trustworthy. Also, Jesus had said to him, along with the other disciples, that his name was written in heaven (Luke 10:20).

* * *

QUESTION THIRTEEN

What is the unpardonable sin?

ANSWER:-- Jesus said that there was only one sin that was unforgivable, the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost (Matt. 12:31).

* * *

QUESTION FOURTEEN

How do you know when a person has committed the unpardonable sin?

ANSWER:-- Dr. J. B. Chapman said: "The devil accuses and the Holy Spirit convicts." Many whom the devil has tried to make believe that they had crossed the deadline have later become victorious Christians. Generally speaking, a person for whom there is no hope will have no desire for God, and the Christians will not have a burden for his salvation.

* * *

QUESTION FIFTEEN

Can a person who has committed murder be saved?

ANSWER:-- Yes. There is only one sin that is unforgivable, and it is not murder (Matt. 12:31; Isa. 1:18).

* * *

QUESTION SIXTEEN

How does one get rid of ugly memories of past sins?

ANSWER:-- Sins that are confessed to God are forgiven (Ps. 103:3; Eph. 1:7; I John 1:9). Someone has said that to be "justified" is to be "just-as-if" you never did it. This forgiveness should be accepted, and one should not continue to grieve over sins that God has forgiven. Forget the past to the best of your ability, and do your best now to serve the Lord in every way you can (Phil. 3:13-14).

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02 -- QUESTIONS ON HOLINESS

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QUESTION SEVENTEEN

Where did the concept or idea of holiness begin?

ANSWER:-- Eph. 1:4 declares, "According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love" (*italics mine*). It has always been the plan of God for men to be holy.

* * *

QUESTION EIGHTEEN

Why two works of grace?

ANSWER:-- There are two works of grace because there are two basic needs in the human heart. There are two types of sin to be dealt with, the nature of sin with which we are born (Ps. 51:50), and the acts of sin which we commit. When we are saved, the sins we've committed are forgiven (I John 1:9); when we are sanctified, our sin nature is purged (I John 1:7). Toplady wrote in "Rock of Ages": "Be of sin the double cure, save from wrath and make me pure" (*italics mine*).

* * *

QUESTION NINETEEN

Speaking of the second work of grace, why can't a person "get it all at once"?

ANSWER:-- The limitation is not with God. It is with man. To be saved, we must confess, repent, and believe God to forgive us of our sins. To be sanctified, we must consecrate ourselves to God, and believe Him for the cleansing of our hearts. This consecration presupposes that we already have repented, for we are giving our redeemed selves to God as a living sacrifice. Briefly, two distinct things happen in these two experiences. In salvation we are forgiven of sins, and in sanctification we are cleansed from sin.

* * *

QUESTION TWENTY

Does a person have to understand sanctification fully in order to be sanctified?

ANSWER:-- No! Not any more than you have to understand salvation completely to be saved. None of us will ever fully understand, but we accept by faith. A perfect understanding is not required, but rather a complete willingness to obey. The Bible says that the Holy Spirit is given by God to "them that obey him" (Acts 5:32). You will better understand sanctification after you receive it.

* * *

QUESTION TWENTY-ONE

What is the difference between sanctification and the baptism with the Holy Spirit?

ANSWER:-- Entire sanctification and the baptism with the Holy Spirit are not different. They describe two aspects of the same experience. Jesus prayed in John 17 that the disciples be "sanctified." This prayer was answered in Acts 2 when they were "filled with the Holy Ghost." Acts 15:8-9 says, "And God . . . bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost . . . purifying their hearts." Their hearts were purified (or sanctified) at the same time that the Holy Ghost came in.

* * *

QUESTION TWENTY-TWO

Were the disciples saved before Pentecost?

ANSWER:-- Yes! (1) their names were written in heaven (Luke 10:20). (2) They were not of the world, even as Christ was not of the world (John 17:14, 16). (3) Jesus called them "not servants ... but . . . friends" (John 15:15).

* * *

QUESTION TWENTY-THREE

What is the spiritual condition of the person described in Romans 7?

ANSWER:-- In Romans 7, Paul is recounting his experience before the infilling of the Holy Spirit. He did not intend to imply that this was the best that God could do for us. He declared in verse 2 of chapter 8, "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." Thank God, we can move from the seventh chapter into the victorious eighth chapter.

* * *

QUESTION TWENTY-FOUR

What must a person do to be sanctified?

ANSWER:--

1. There must be a conscious sense of the need for such an experience. This comes through reading the Word, hearing holiness preaching, listening to the testimonies of sanctified persons, reading holiness books, and becoming aware of one's own spiritual lack.

2. There must be a confession of the need (Isa. 6:5).

3. There must be a complete consecration of the life to Christ (Rom. 12:1).

4. There must be a claiming of the promises of God's Word (I Thess. 5:24; I John 1:7).

* * *

QUESTION TWENTY-FIVE

After a seeker has done all he knows to do to be sanctified and is still not satisfied, what else is there to do?

ANSWER:-- Let God search the heart to see that the consecration is complete -- that nothing is held back from the Lord. When one is sure that all is on the altar, then he can trust God's promise that He will perform the work. It is that final step of faith that brings victory.

* * *

QUESTION TWENTY-SIX

What is the evidence that a person is filled with the Spirit?

ANSWER:-- The evidence is not necessarily some particular gift of the Spirit (I Cor. 13:1-3). The evidence that a person is filled with the Spirit is twofold: (1) he has power to witness (Acts 1:8); and (2) he produces the fruit of the Spirit in his life: "love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance (Gal. 5:22-23). These are the only scriptural tests as to whether or not a person is filled with the Spirit.

* * *

QUESTION TWENTY-SEVEN

What is the difference between surrender and consecration?

ANSWER:-- In the spiritual realm, surrender means saying to God, "I will no more rebel against You and Your will. I give up. You shall have Your way." To consecrate is deeper. It is saying, "Lord, I love You so much that I dedicate my life completely to You to be used in any way You will." Surrender is giving up our rebellion; consecration is giving over our all to Him because we love Him.

* * *

QUESTION TWENTY-EIGHT

How can a person distinguish between carnality and humanity?

ANSWER:-- II Cor. 4:7 says, "But we have this treasure in earthen vessels." It is a glorious treasure, this precious possession of holiness, but it is still subject to the limitations of the human body that is its vessel. Paul makes a practical distinction in the eighth and ninth verses: "We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but

not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed." The sanctified person will still be troubled, perplexed, persecuted, and at times cast down, but this is not carnality; it is normal reaction of the earthen vessel that holds our sacred treasure. The basic difference between humanity and carnality is that our humanity is ruled by physical and mental causes, whereas carnality stems from unsanctified selfishness and sin.

* * *

QUESTION TWENTY-NINE

Can sin reenter once it has been destroyed?

ANSWER:-- Yes. When Adam and Eve were created, they had no sin in their hearts. However, by disobedience to God, sin entered into the human family. Even though our hearts may once have been cleansed from sin, disobedience brings sin back into the heart.

* * *

QUESTION THIRTY

Will a Christian person be saved who died never having had light on some matters (for instance, on sanctification), but was a faithful Christian otherwise?

ANSWER:-- Yes. We are judged according to our willingness to obey God in what we know, and are not responsible for any light that we do not have. However, a word of warning is in order: We are responsible for all the light we have. It's not the things we don't know that matter; it's what we do know.

* * *

QUESTION THIRTY-ONE

How long should a person wait after conversion until he seeks to be sanctified?

ANSWER:-- There is no need to wait! The sooner a person gets sanctified, the better equipped he will be to face temptation. I have known many to get sanctified in the very next service after they were converted.

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03 -- QUESTIONS ON PRAYER

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QUESTION THIRTY-TWO

How can I know that God is hearing me when I pray, that I am not just "praying into the air"?

ANSWER:-- This is where faith comes into play. "Faith is the evidence of things not seen" (Heb. 11:1). I John 5:14 says, "And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us." From this promise of God we can know that, if we are praying subject to the will of God, then regardless of how we feel or what the devil may say, God is hearing our prayer.

* * *

QUESTION THIRTY-THREE

Does prayer actually change things, or does it just produce a good psychological effect on the person who prays?

ANSWER:-- Not only in Bible times but ever since, prayer has been effectual in changing the course of events and in producing miracles. And prayer has been answered in bringing the unsaved to repentance through the convicting power of the Holy Spirit. God does answer prayer.

Someone has said, "Prayer moves the hand that moves the world." God purposed to destroy the children of Israel, but Moses' prayer of intercession changed the course of history and a whole nation was spared (Deut. 9:18-19). Elijah, the man of God, prayed and rain was withheld for three years and a half. He "prayed again, and the heaven gave rain" (Jas. 5:18). Yes, prayer changes things. In II Chron. 7:14, God's promise is recorded that "if my people . . . shall humble themselves, and pray . . . then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land."

* * *

QUESTION THIRTY-FOUR

Does God always answer prayer?

ANSWER:-- Yes, but not always in the manner we anticipate. He has three ways of answering our prayers: sometimes He gives an immediate "yes" (Isa. 65:24); sometimes in His wisdom He says, "No" (Matt. 26:42); and at other times He says, "Wait awhile" (Luke 18:7-8).

* * *

QUESTION THIRTY-FIVE

How much time should a person spend in private devotions each day?

ANSWER:-- In other words you would be asking, How long does it take to keep spiritually on top? The amount of time that a person spends in his private devotions each day is somewhat

indicative of his love for God, and his relish for holy things. Spend enough time in prayer and Bible study each day so that there will be a "touch of God" on your life throughout the day. Remember that you don't find time for devotions; you take time.

* * *

QUESTION THIRTY-SIX

You say we should have a systematic devotional life. When is the best time to do this?

ANSWER:-- Most people will say the best time for private devotions is early in the morning before beginning the day's activities. This will solve a lot of problems.

1. It takes care of the time element. If you wait until later in the day to "find time," you may get busy and not "find" it. First things first; give it priority.

2. It gives strength when needed, to begin with. "You must meet God in the morning if you want Him through the day."

* * *

QUESTION THIRTY-SEVEN

How can a person obey the command to "pray without ceasing"?

ANSWER:-- To "pray without ceasing" does not mean that we stay on our knees all the time, for this would be humanly impossible. But we can stay in an attitude of prayer at all times. It used to be termed staying on "praying grounds" and "pleading terms" with the Lord.

* * *

QUESTION THIRTY-EIGHT

After a person has prayed once, why does he have to keep on praying for the same thing? Didn't God hear the first time?

ANSWER:-- In Luke 18, Jesus spoke a parable to this end, "that men ought always to pray, and not to faint." The parable concerns the widow who kept troubling the unjust judge until he said, "I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me." And then Jesus added, "And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them? I tell you that he will avenge them speedily" (Luke 18:7-8). Read also Heb. 10:35-37.

* * *

QUESTION THIRTY-NINE

When a person has prayed earnestly for his loved ones for a long time and they are still not saved, what should he do?

ANSWER:-- Most of us have prayers that are still on the waiting list." George Muller said that, when he had a matter to pray about, the first thing he did was search the Word of God for a promise, and when he knew it was in God's will he would not let go until the answer came. The Amplified New Testament translates Luke 11:9, "Ask and keep on asking, and it shall be given you; seek and keep on seeking, and you shall find; knock and keep on knocking, and the door shall be opened unto you." There's nothing wrong with what you're doing. Just do more of it. "Keep holding on; just one more hour may bring to you the promised power."

* * *

QUESTION FORTY

You talk about becoming desperate when we pray. Why does one have to be desperate? Isn't God willing to answer?

ANSWER:-- Yes, God is more willing to give than we are to receive. We become desperate in prayer, not to overcome God's reluctance, but to "break through" the powers of darkness. The Bible tells us, "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." And at no time are these evil forces against us more than when we are praying. This enemy power hindered Daniel's prayer three full weeks, but he persevered until the answer finally came through (Dan. 10:12).

* * *

QUESTION FORTY-ONE

What is meant by the term "praying through"?

ANSWER:-- This term implies two things: (1) You pray until you are through praying. You feel that the answer is on the way, so you have no reason to pray farther about it. (2) To get to the answer, we must pray through the powers of darkness that oppose us. We "pray through" when we reach a point of assurance.

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QUESTION FORTY-TWO

Can we pray for sinners, or do they have to pray for themselves?

ANSWER:-- I John 5:16 says "If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he [the Christian] shall ask, and he [God] shall give him life for them [the sinners] that sin not unto death." Moses prayed and a whole nation was spared (Deut. 9:18-19). Paul says in I Tim. 2:14, "I

exhort therefore, that . . . supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men . . . For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God. . . who will have all men to be saved." The Christian is to be an intercessor (go-between) for the sinner, and must not sin against the sinner by failing to pray for him (I Sam. 12:23).

* * *

QUESTION FORTY-THREE

Is the fact that one's mind is distracted when he is praying a sign that he is not saved, and therefore not really interested?

ANSWER:-- There are very few people who pray who do not at some time have a battle with wandering thoughts. This is not a sign of sin but part of our human frailty. It is the devil's business, too, to divert our attention.

* * *

QUESTION FORTY-FOUR

Would you explain fasting?

ANSWER:-- Suffice it is to say that (1) Jesus fasted (Luke 4:2), the leaders of the Early Church fasted (Acts 13:2), and other great spiritual leaders have fasted (Moses, Exod. 34:28; Elijah, I Kings 19:8; Daniel, Dan. 10:3; and Paul, Acts 9:9). (2) We are commanded to fast (Joel 1:14; Matt. 17:21). (3) Fasting brings great spiritual results.

* * *

QUESTION FORTY-FIVE

Should a person fast regularly, or should he wait for the Lord to "lay it on his heart" before he fasts?

ANSWER:-- The early Methodists under the leadership of John Wesley fasted each Wednesday and Friday until 3 p.m. They did not wait for a special burden but did this as a matter of regular religious practice. The great spiritual awakening of that day testifies to the results of their faithfulness. I think that every Christian would greatly profit by a regular time of fasting. In addition to this, of course, we should fast whenever led by God to do it.

* * *

QUESTION FORTY-SIX

Is it a lack of faith to pray for a person to be healed "if it be the Lord's will"?

ANSWER:-- To pray for God's will to be done is never a lack of faith, but an act of humble submission to Him. This attitude is absolutely essential if we are to receive from God that which is best for all concerned. There is never a higher form of prayer than saying, "Thy will be done." In this kind of prayer the Lord may leave our circumstances as they are, but change us. An example of this is the Apostle Paul, who sought the Lord three times that a "thorn in the flesh" would depart. God didn't see fit to remove the thorn, but did say, "My grace is sufficient for thee." Paul's whole attitude was then changed, for he said, "Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me" (II Cor. 12:7-10). After all, we can get to heaven with sick bodies, but we can't with wrong attitudes toward God.

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04 -- QUESTIONS ON CHRISTIAN LIVING

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QUESTION FORTY-SEVEN

What advice would you give a new convert to help him in his Christian life?

ANSWER:--

1. Pray daily.
2. Read God's Word daily.
3. Attend church services faithfully.
4. Witness to others.

I have never known of a person backsliding who did these four things.

* * *

QUESTION FORTY-EIGHT

What is meant by the term "walking in the light"?

ANSWER:-- Spiritual light may be defined as "the revelation of God's will to the human heart." To walk in the light is to do that which God reveals to us as His will. It simply means minding God. One word sums it up: "obedience."

* * *

QUESTION FORTY-NINE

How does a person overcome temptation?

ANSWER:-- The Bible says, "Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good" (Rom. 12:21). Be diligent about being filled with the good, and you won't have room for the evil. Three good ways to overcome temptation are:

1. Through the Holy Spirit's power (Zech. 4:6; John 16:13).
2. Through prayer (Matt. 26:41).
3. Through the Word of God (Ps. 119:11).

A person should not deliberately throw himself into the path of temptation. However, when temptation comes we have the assurance that we can overcome, even as Jesus did (I Cor. 10:13; Heb. 2:18; 4:15).

* * *

QUESTION FIFTY

If a person has doubts, is this proof that he is not right with God?

ANSWER:-- Not necessarily so. The temptation to doubt and actual doubt are two different things. John the Baptist, while in prison, sent word to Jesus, for whom he had been the forerunner, saying, "Art thou he that should come? or look we for another?" Jesus was very patient and understanding in the answer He sent back to John, and did not imply that John had committed sin (Luke 7:22-23). Doubt may come from the devil, and should be resisted, or it may come from the fact that one is not in right relationship with God. Each individual must decide for himself which source his doubt comes from and react accordingly.

* * *

QUESTION FIFTY-ONE

How can a person tell whether he has sinned and therefore broken contact with God or has just made a mistake and is therefore not backslidden?

ANSWER:-- The difference between a mistake and sin is that sin means a willful act has been committed against God's known will, whereas a mistake is involuntary. Many times new Christians are confused at this point, but keep this in mind -- if you sin, you know it, and you knew it before you did it. Else it was not a sin; it was a mistake.

* * *

QUESTION FIFTY-TWO

When a person realizes that he has sinned, what should he do?

ANSWER:-- Go immediately to God in prayer. Dr. F. B. Meyer used to talk about "keeping short accounts with God." Don't let the sin get you down or keep you down. You don't have to wait until the next altar service at the church. Settle it right on the spot. I John 2:1 says, "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not." But he goes on to say, "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." God is not waiting over you with a club ready to beat you over the head when you fall, He is merciful and will forgive "seventy times seven." As soon as you realize you have failed, go to God with this failure -- immediately.

* * *

QUESTION FIFTY-THREE

When a person feels that he has made a mistake (not willfully sinned), what should he do?

ANSWER:-- Don't brush it aside. Pray about it. Do something about correcting it. But don't let the devil trick you into "throwing up your hands" and quitting. You are human and will make mistakes as long as you have a human body in which to make them.

* * *

QUESTION FIFTY-FOUR

Does a person have to "feel good" all the time in order to be assured that he is saved?

ANSWER:-- No! Our feelings come and go, and are influenced by such factors as how much sleep we get, the food we eat, and our general physical condition. But we are saved by faith, and not by feeling (Eph. 2:8). Say with the poet, "My hope is built on nothing less than Jesus' blood and righteousness. I dare not trust the sweetest frame, but wholly lean on Jesus' name." Yes, there is feeling in salvation, but this is not our only way of knowing we are saved. Keep trusting God and His Word even when you don't feel like it. As you "live by faith" the "feeling" will come in due time.

* * *

QUESTION FIFTY-FIVE

How may a person know it is the Lord speaking to him and not the devil?

ANSWER:-- Someone has given us the following four-point test to determine where an impression comes from: (1) Is it scriptural? (2) Is it right? (3) Is it providential? (4) Is it reasonable? If we can answer, "Yes," to all of these, then most likely it is of God.

* * *

QUESTION FIFTY-SIX

How does one know when he has a call to preach, or to some other full-time Christian service?

ANSWER:-- God has various ways of letting us know. With some it is a direct, clear, and distinct moment when they feel God speaking to them. With others it is an inner urge, or a deepening conviction that this is the will of God for their lives. This persuasion lingers with them till they say, "Yes."

* * *

QUESTION FIFTY-SEVEN

How can a person have joy?

ANSWER:-- There are three ways to find Christian joy: (1) Seek to be a deep Christian, sanctified and "growing in grace" (John 17:13); (2) study God's Word (I John 1:4); (3) pray (John 16:24). If we are diligent and earnest in these, we will have joy as a by-product.

* * *

QUESTION FIFTY-EIGHT

What is the difference between evil thoughts and thoughts of evil?

ANSWER:-- A thought of evil may flash through the mind of a person as a matter of temptation. This is not sin. The Bible says that Jesus was "in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." Sin enters in when a person harbors an evil thought in his mind, continues to think on it and plan how he will carry through with the wicked intention. "You can't keep the birds from flying over your head [thoughts of evil], but you can keep them from making a nest in your hair [evil thoughts]."

* * *

QUESTION FIFTY-NINE

Is it an indication of personal sin when a Christian suffers?

ANSWER:-- No. There are three sources of troubles for God's people: (1) The devil tempts. (2) The Lord tries. (3) Satan-inspired people persecute. None of these is a matter of personal sin. It was said of Job, in spite of all his trials, "In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly" (Job 1:22). Jesus pronounced blessing on us "when men shall revile . . . persecute . . . and say all manner of evil against" us falsely, for His sake (Matt. 5:11). Some of the saintliest people have had to suffer great physical pain (II Cor. 12:7-10).

* * *

QUESTION SIXTY

What scriptures would you suggest for a person to read who is going through a severe physical and financial trial?

ANSWER:-- Psalms 27; 37; and 91; also John 14.

* * *

QUESTION SIXTY-ONE

How can I better understand the Bible?

ANSWER:-- Jesus said concerning the Holy Spirit, "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you. into all truth" (John 16:13, italics mine). Many have testified to a new love for and a new understanding of the Bible when the Holy Spirit came in.

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05 -- QUESTIONS ON CHRISTIAN PRACTICES

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QUESTION SIXTY-TWO

Why are there so many different denominations?

ANSWER:-- The various denominations are as "family units" in the great kingdom of God, just as there are family groups in the human race. All born-again Christians are members of the body of Christ, but we may serve Christ through different church affiliations (I Cor. 12:12-27).

* * *

QUESTION SIXTY-THREE

Should a person tithe? Wasn't this an Old Testament practice, not applying to this day?

ANSWER:-- Tithing was an Old Testament requirement. It was used for the support of the priests (Levites), for festivals, and to care for the poor. In addition to the tithe the Israelites were asked to give offerings for special purposes. Jesus commended tithing (Matt. 23:23), and even though there is no explicit command to this effect, are not the obligations of New Testament grace more compelling than Old Testament law?

Tithing is the most reasonable way of financing the work of God's kingdom. If you are not a tither, why not give it a try?

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QUESTION SIXTY-FOUR

Should a person tithe on his gross income, or just on what is left after expenses are paid?

ANSWER:-- Gross salary or income should be tithed before living expenses, taxes, and other such items are deducted. A farmer or businessman should deduct the expense of running his farm or conducting his business and tithe the balance.

* * *

QUESTION SIXTY-FIVE

Will tithing solve my financial problems?

ANSWER:-- God has promised blessing to those who honor Him with tithes and offerings (Mal. 3:10-11). However, this should not be our reason for tithing; rather we tithe because this is God's plan for the financing of the Kingdom. Financial reverses can come to faithful tithers, but you should continue to trust God and remain faithful. He will bring you through (Luke 12:15).

* * *

QUESTION SIXTY-SIX

Is divine healing for today?

ANSWER:-- Yes. "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever" (Heb. 13:8). His power to heal is unchanged, and many are the witnesses to this fact.

* * *

QUESTION SIXTY-SEVEN

Why do we keep Sunday for the Sabbath while the Israelites kept Saturday in the Old Testament?

ANSWER:-- We keep Sunday because Jesus arose on the third day after Friday (which would be Sunday). For a time the Early Church observed both the seventh and the first days; then gradually the first day of the week displaced the seventh as the Church's recognized day of worship.

* * *

QUESTION SIXTY-EIGHT

Is it right for a woman to preach?

ANSWER:-- Acts 2:18 quotes the promise of Joel 2 which says, "And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out . . . of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy" (*italics mine*). Philip had four daughters "which did prophesy" (Acts 21:9).

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QUESTION SIXTY-NINE

Can a Christian fight in time of war?

ANSWER:-- Yes. Servicemen are fighting for a just cause, and do not necessarily have personal animosity against the people they are fighting.

* * *

QUESTION SEVENTY

Why send missionaries when there are so many unevangelized people in America?

ANSWER:-- For the most part, the people in America have ample opportunity to hear the Gospel. Many parts of the world are not so favored. Rom. 10:14 says, "How shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?" We cannot slacken our outreach at home or abroad. It must be intensified in all places.

* * *

QUESTION SEVENTY-ONE

Why have emotion in religion?

ANSWER:-- Man is an emotional being and the emotions can never be completely divorced from religious experience. The Early Church had both fear of God (Acts 5:11) and gladness (Acts 2:46-47). When the people of Samaria accepted Christ, there was "great joy" in that city (Acts 8:8). When God controls the total personality, this involves the emotions. See Josh. 6:20; I Sam. 4:5; and Isa. 12:6.

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QUESTION SEVENTY-TWO

Is the "old-fashioned revival" approach relevant to this modern day?

ANSWER:-- Yes. Basically man's problem (sin) is the same in any generation; also the answer (Christ) is always the same. The "old-fashioned revival" speaks a timeless message that is always relevant to man's heart need. It is still greatly used of God to bring men to decision for Christ.

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06 -- QUESTIONS ON RIGHT AND WRONG

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QUESTION SEVENTY-THREE

What should rule Christian conduct?

ANSWER:-- Why not answer that question with another? "Is this for the glory of God?" If not, the Christian should leave it alone (Col. 3:17). We should not do anything we would not want Jesus to do along with us. If we couldn't be comfortable with Jesus around, then we should not do it. Such things as movies, risque theater, Sunday sports, etc., are not consistent with Christian practices (Phil. 4:8; Ps. 101:3).

* * *

QUESTION SEVENTY-FOUR

What is worldliness?

ANSWER:-- I John 2:16 defines worldliness as (1) "the lust of the flesh," (2) "the lust of the eyes," and (3) "the pride of life." Anything that lessens your appreciation of spiritual things, disturbs your Christian conscience, or detracts from your love for God and your commitment to Him is worldliness.

* * *

QUESTION SEVENTY-FIVE

Does the Bible say anything about how a person should dress?

ANSWER:-- I Tim. 2:9-10 says, "In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; but (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works." Also read Jer. 4:30 and I Pet. 3:3-4. The principles of modesty and simplicity also apply to men.

* * *

QUESTION SEVENTY-SIX

Should a Christian work on Sunday?

ANSWER:-- Sunday should be a holy day set apart for worship and rest. No unnecessary work should be done on this day. Where a person's job requires him to work, God is reasonable. A new job, not requiring Sunday work, should be obtained if possible.

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QUESTION SEVENTY-SEVEN

What can a Christian young person do on Sunday afternoon?

ANSWER:-- Sunday afternoons can best be spent either in rest, reading, Christian fellowship, or in some form of witnessing for Christ.

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QUESTION SEVENTY-EIGHT

Why is mixed bathing considered wrong?

ANSWER:-- Because of the scanty attire that is worn by both men and women. Much sexual lust may be inspired by physical appearance.

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QUESTION SEVENTY-NINE

What is wrong with dancing?

ANSWER:-- It has sex as its basic motivation. Regardless of individual opinion, there is an overwhelming weight of objection to the dance among Christian people. If the collective conscience of the Church is against any practice, you cannot afford to indulge in it.

* * *

QUESTION EIGHTY

Should Christians go to the movies?

ANSWER:-- A Christian should not go anyplace where he could not take Christ with him. If a person insists on going to the movies, he will have to leave Christ behind. A good question to ask is, "Would I want to be found at the movie when Jesus comes?" It is readily apparent that movies are getting worse. Even the secular press admits that. And even most of the so-called

"good" movies have some objectionable features. And there is the matter of influence. The association of the movie is all negative. If you go to a "good" movie, others may use it as an excuse for attending the "bad" ones (which almost all of them are). Here's another case of group conscience. Most evangelical churches have taken a stand against movie-going.

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QUESTION EIGHTY-ONE

Is it a sin to consult a fortune-teller?

ANSWER:-- Yes. Read Deuteronomy, chapter 18, and Acts, chapter 16.

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QUESTION EIGHTY-TWO

Is it wrong to use tobacco?

ANSWER:-- Yes. I Cor. 3:16-17 tells us that our bodies are the "temple of God," and "if any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy." Tobacco has been proved to be harmful to the body. On this basis it is wrong to use it. Also read I Cor. 6:19-20; II Cor. 6:16-17.

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QUESTION EIGHTY-THREE

You say that use of tobacco is wrong because it is harmful to the body. What about overeating, and anything else which might be considered harmful to the body?

ANSWER:-- We should abstain from anything that we know is harmful to the body. For a person deliberately to do something that will harm his body is not only wrong; it shows a serious lack of self-discipline.

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07 -- QUESTIONS ON THE HOME

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QUESTION EIGHTY-FOUR

Should a Christian marry an unsaved person?

ANSWER:-- The Bible warns against being "unequally yoked together with unbelievers" (II Cor. 6:14). It seldom works, for this is a crucial point at which there must be common interest.

* * *

QUESTION EIGHTY-FIVE

Who is to be the head of the house?

ANSWER:-- I Pet. 3:1-7 gives us the formula for a Christian home life. The wife "in subjection to her husband," the husband "giving honour unto the wife," and they both "being heirs together of the grace of life" (*italics mine*). No one dictates in the happy, Christian home but both husband and wife work together with love and respect for each other.

* * *

QUESTION EIGHTY-SIX

Should a husband and wife with previous marriages separate after becoming Christians?

ANSWER:-- Two wrongs will not make a right. Someone has rightly said, "You can't unscramble eggs." Many times, too, children are involved, and to tear the home apart would be tragic. Trust God for mercy and grace to live rightly now. Leave the forgiven past in His hands, and trust Him to make your present life and home a happy one.

* * *

QUESTION EIGHTY-SEVEN

Should parents discipline their children?

ANSWER:-- Yes, if they need it. Prov. 13:24 says, "He that spareth his rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes." Again Solomon said, "Withhold not correction from the child: for if thou beatest him with the rod, he shall not die. Thou shalt beat him with the rod, and shalt deliver his soul from hell" (Prov. 23:13-14). A child who is taught to obey his parents will find it much easier to obey God. In addition to punishment, the child must also be shown much love if he is to develop properly.

* * *

QUESTION EIGHTY-EIGHT

How does a family start having family worship?

ANSWER:-- The best way to get started is simply to get the family together and start! The perfect time probably will never come. You will just have to begin anyhow. Set a regular time, morning, noon, or evening, and stay with it. Family worship time should always include two things: (1) Reading the Word of God, (2) Prayer. Some families use a devotional guide such as

Come Ye Apart. Others like to sing together. Some families have every person to pray each time, while others call on one to lead the prayer. But these two elements are basic: prayer and Bible reading.

* * *

QUESTION EIGHTY-NINE

What time of day is best for family worship?

ANSWER:-- This varies according to family work and school schedules. Some families prefer the morning, while others find an evening hour more suitable. A time should be worked out that is the most convenient and beneficial to all.

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QUESTION NINETY

Should the mother work outside the home?

ANSWER:-- Only in cases of necessity. A mother's primary obligation is to her family, especially when there are young children involved.

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QUESTION NINETY-ONE

What should a person do who finds out that his or her companion has been untrue?

ANSWER:-- If the guilty one asks forgiveness and gives evidence of being true to you now, you will either forgive or God will not forgive you (Matt. 6:14-15). Forget the past and make a happy home now (Phil. 3:13).

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08 -- QUESTIONS ON THE HEREAFTER

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QUESTION NINETY-TWO

Do our loved ones in heaven see us today?

ANSWER:-- Heb. 12:1 says that we are "compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses." This implies that our loved ones gone before are watching us.

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QUESTION NINETY-THREE

Will we know each other in heaven?

ANSWER:-- I believe so. We are told in I Cor. 13:12 that we shall know even as we are known.

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QUESTION NINETY-FOUR

If a mother-to-be destroys her unborn child, is that murder?

ANSWER:-- Yes! At the moment of conception, life begins, and to destroy life is murder (Exod. 20:13). If it is a legal abortion for the saving of the mother's life, then this is a matter where God is understanding; but if the abortion is for a selfish reason, it is sinful.

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QUESTION NINETY-FIVE

When a child is stillborn, does it go to heaven?

ANSWER:-- Yes! Life begins at the time of conception, and where there is human life, there is a soul.

* * *

QUESTION NINETY-SIX

Will there be any children in hell?

ANSWER:-- No. Children who die before the age of accountability will go to heaven. Jesus said we are to "become as little children" to enter heaven (Matt. 18:3).

* * *

QUESTION NINETY-SEVEN

What is the Second Coming?

ANSWER:-- I Thess. 4:16-18 will best answer this question:

1. It is the returning of the Lord -- "For the Lord himself shall descend."

2. It will be only for those who are prepared for it -- "The dead in Christ shall rise."

3. It will be a time of resurrection of the righteous dead and of receiving up of the righteous living. We shall be "caught up together in the clouds."

4. It will be an introduction to Jesus. We shall "meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord."

* * *

QUESTION NINETY-EIGHT

When is Jesus coming again?

ANSWER:-- Jesus said, "But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only" (Matt. 24:36). However there are certain signs of His coming that Jesus said will indicate that His coming is near at hand. He said, "So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors" (Matt. 24:33). The signs indicate that we are living now in the "end time." The all-important consideration is found in Matt. 24:44. "Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of man cometh."

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QUESTION NINETY-NINE

Will the Church go through any of the tribulation?

ANSWER:-- Luke 21:36 says, "Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass" (*italics mine*). Rev. 3:10 says, "Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth" (*italics mine*). Jesus said that, as it was in the days of Noah and the days of Lot, so it would be in the "days of the Son of man." It is of significance that not one drop of water fell on Noah, and none of the fire and brimstone fell on Lot. They were delivered before the wrath of God was poured out.

* * *

QUESTION ONE HUNDRED

If we go to our eternal reward immediately upon death, will there also be a resurrection of the body?

ANSWER:-- The soul is invisible, going to the realm of the spirit upon death. This is the state that Jesus was in after His crucifixion until the third day. However His body was raised from the dead, and in this new body He ascended back to heaven after 40 days. Paul says that the

righteous dead shall be raised "incorruptible." "For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality" (I Cor. 15:53).

* * *

QUESTION ONE HUNDRED ONE

Is the coming of the Lord near at hand?

ANSWER:-- There seems to be every indication that "the coming of the Lord draweth nigh." Read Matt. 24:38; II Tim. 3:1-5.

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THE END