

Truly my answer

We read newspapers, listen to television or to the radio to find our answers yet there are stories of crime, war, and terrorism! The Bible provides answers to the questions we acquire. There are 66 books and letters that make up the Bible that are divided into chapters and verses. The Bible helps me understand that it's only human to want to be understood. And if my parents are critical or uninterested in things I like, I can feel frustrated. Proverbs 20:29 states: "The beauty of young men is their power." This strength can lay the groundwork for all sorts of conflicts between me and my parents. Proverb continues: "And the splendor of old men is their gray headedness." This is telling me that parents are older and tend to view life differently. Personal experience may have tempered the idealism they once had as youths. Because of this wisdom born of experience- "gray headedness," as it were- they just may not share my enthusiasm over certain matters. The Bible can also help me cope with peer pressure. With the Bible I have learned that peer influence is not necessarily bad. A proverb says: "By iron, iron itself is sharpened. So one man sharpens the face of another." (Proverbs 27:17). Just as an iron knife can sharpen the dulled edge of another knife, fellowship with some kids can sharpen my personalities and make me a better person. All too often, however, peer influence lacks in maturity both mental and spiritual. I have learned through the Bible readings that much peer pressure has viewpoints and opinions that are unsound, unreliable, and even reckless. So when a youth unquestioningly comes under the control of peers, it may be little more than the blind leading the blind. How important are looks? A few of us, if any, are entirely satisfied with our appearance. An appearance can change so rapidly that, according to one psychologist, teens often "feel like strangers in their own bodies." God himself has an appreciation for beauty. Ecclesiastes 3:11: "Everything [God] had made pretty in its time." And how you look can indeed have a profound effect upon the way others

view and treat you. It can affect a person's self-confidence and what he does and does not do in life. Should I quit school? Not surprisingly an alarming number of youths choose not to go to school at all! In the United States alone, some two and a half million students of elementary and secondary schools are absent every day! An article in *The New York Times* adds that so many (about one third) are "chronically absent" in NYC high schools "that it is nearly impossible to teach them." Admittedly, problems plague school systems around the world. But is this reason to lose all interest in school and drop out? And how does school fit in? In the Bible it shows that centuries ago King Solomon wrote proverbs "to give to the inexperienced ones shrewdness, to a young man knowledge and thinking ability." (Proverbs 1:1-4). Yes, inexperience goes with youth. School, however, can help you nurture and cultivate thinking ability. This is the ability not merely to recite facts but also to analyze them and generate productive ideas from them.

Lying to escape punishment might seem advantageous at the time. But the Bible warns: "He that launches forth lies will not escape." (Proverbs 29:5). The likelihood is great that the lie will be exposed. "A false tongue" was and is one of the things that "God does hate." (Proverbs 6:16, 17) After all, it is Satan the Devil himself who is "the father of the lie." (John 8:44) And the Bible makes no distinction between lies and so-called white lies. "No lie originates with the truth." (1 John 2:21). Drinking, why not? Is it wrong to drink? Is it really harmful? When used moderately, alcohol can indeed be a source of pleasure. The Bible acknowledges that wine can make the heart merry or can enhance the taste of a meal. (Ecclesiastes 9:7). When misused, however, alcohol creates serious problems ranging from run-ins with parents, teachers, and police to premature death. As the Bible says: "Wine is a ridiculer, intoxicating liquor is boisterous, and everyone going astray by it is not wise." (Proverbs 20:1). The Bible also has views on drugs. Of course, marijuana is just one of many popular drugs. But it well illustrates that there is ample

reason to avoid taking any mind-altering substances for pleasure. Says the Bible: “The beauty of young men is their power.” (Proverbs 20:29). The Bible tells us to “safeguard...thinking ability,” not to ruin it through chemical abuse.(Proverbs 3:21) It further exhorts: “Let us cleanse ourselves of every defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in God’s fear.” Really, it is only to those who have ‘cleansed themselves of defilement,’ avoiding practices like drug abuse, that God promises: “‘I will take you in.’ ‘And I shall be a father to you.’” -2 Corinthians 6:17-7:1. In some developing countries, leisure time is a rare commodity. But in Western lands, youths often have more time on their hands than they know what to do with. Whether your leisure time is a blessing or a curse depends upon how you use it. In the Bible King Solomon warned: “To the making of many books there is no end, and much devotion to them is wearisome to the flesh.” (Ecclesiastes 12:12) Solomon was not trying to discourage reading; he was just advising you to be selective. Not all writers are worth ‘conversing’ with, nor are all their thoughts really “noble.” So the oft-quoted Bible principle again comes into play: “Bad associations spoil useful habits.” (1 Corinthians 15:30) The Bible is important in my life because it gives me so many insights on key lessons that it has taught me, noteworthy change in prompting me to do in my life, and shaping my outlook in significant ways for my future. The Bible is truly my answer.