

## FIFTY QUESTIONS: TOWARD AN INTENTIONAL RELATIONSHIP

*Compiled by Williams Loveless*

A man and a woman can have the kind of relationship they want and need. Since the ear is the organ of intimacy, listening and talking are important in the building an intentional relationship. These 50 questions are designed to stimulate discussion that can lead to better communication and understanding. They are listed in random order and some of them can be discussed repeatedly.

Use the question list to structure your own discussions and enjoy one of the most rewarding of all endeavors - to know and be known. Be honest and careful with your answers.

1. How are your cultural backgrounds similar and different?
2. Were your parents happily married? Why?
3. In what ways are you similar and different from your parents? Which parent?
4. Can you talk together for hours about all sorts of things without getting bored?
5. Please list three things you would like your friend to do more often.
6. What are five of your most important strengths as a person?
7. What aspects of your own behavior would you like to change?
8. What are five major interests you and your friend share?
9. Is there any way in which a positive change in your friend's behavior would help you to make changes which you would like to see in yourself?
10. What changes in your lifestyle, if any, would it be possible, and wise, to make at this point?
11. What are your major interests in life at the present time?
12. Who and what do you turn to when you feel discouraged or anxious?
13. What does your friend appreciate in you? Make a list.
14. What does your friend need and want from you. Make a list.
15. What initially attracted you to each other?
16. What differences between you have given you the most trouble?
17. What did you think of the first time you kissed?
18. When people date they often do so on the basis of personality traits that compliment each other. What traits do you have that attracted your friend to you?

19. Make a list of your closest friends, and then focus on each of them by asking:

What is he/she doing for me?

What am I doing for him/her?

Are there some changes needed?

20. How do you normally resolve conflicts?

21. How do you usually communicate unhappiness and disagreement?

22. What are some rituals in your family? What rituals would you like to have when you start a family? Why?

23. What religious convictions do you have?

24. What church meetings do you attend? Which ones do you enjoy the most?

25. Do you believe in a personal God and do you pray?

26. How much money did you contribute to your church last year?

27. What career and vocational goals do you aspire to?

28. Do you have a budget?

29. Do you believe in buying on credit? Why?

30. How did your parents handle finances? Who made the decisions?

31. Which of your parents "wore the pants"?

32. What was the sexual climate in your home?

33. What do you think are important goals for the behavior of children? How can they best be achieved?

34. How many children would you like to have? Would you be happy in meeting your children's needs before meeting your own needs?

35. What and exactly how much are you contributing to the relationship?

36. Does the possibility of making a life-long commitment frighten you? Why?

37. How do you feel about interracial relationships?

38. For each of the following situations, carefully describe the conditions under which the behavior would and would not be acceptable to you and why:

Spending time with an ex-boyfriend/girlfriend

Flirting

Showing physical affection to a friend of the opposite sex

Having sexual intercourse with a friend

39. Do you believe that all families should have a "chain of command"? What do you think it should be?

40. What is one thing you would change about yourself if you could?

41. What books or articles (outside school assignments) have you read in the last three months? What did you enjoy or learn from them?

42. What is your attitude toward debt, insurance, and real estate?

43. What have you learned about yourself in this relationship?

44. What attitude do you have toward professional counseling?

45. Would you ever consider divorce? Under what conditions and for what causes?

46. What does it mean when you say, "I love you"?

47. A secret contract is the belief by courting friends that after commitment each will continue to act in accordance with values and patterns established that time they wed. In which of the following areas may you have entered into a "secret contract"?

Ownership of property and other assets

Management of household responsibilities

Use of free time

Role of religion

Role of relatives

Management of alcohol and other drugs

Management of health and personal appearance

Development of independent and mutual personal interests

Role of friends

Ways of expressing affection

Details of sexual expression

Education and professional development

48. What would you like to talk about now?

49. What are the dangers facing a Christian couple contemplating marriage today?

50. What important decision have you made in the past and how do you feel about it now?