

“Advice for Living”

April 1958  
Chicago, Ill.

**Question:** *My husband and I were members of the same church. A few weeks ago, in a church meeting, I took sides with the minister. My husband got very angry. He recently joined another church and now he will not let our daughter go to the old church. He insists that I attend the church he joined. Is he right in making this decision?*

**Answer:** It is always very unfortunate for anyone to leave a church because of some disagreement with the minister. Unless the situation is unalterably bad, you should calmly and patiently seek to convince your husband that it would probably be better for him to seek to become reconciled with your minister rather than insist on you and your daughter joining the other church. Through such a reconciliation it will be possible for your husband to honorably come back to his old church. This is a very touchy problem, but if it is handled properly I believe it can be worked out. If you can convince your husband that your roots are in your church and that his roots are also there, he will probably come to see that it will be better for him to return to the old church than for you to go to the new church. You should also discuss this whole question with your minister and show him the urgent need for your family to be together. Through such mutual interchange I think the problem can be solved.

**Question:** *I am a 17-year-old musician and I belong to the church. I play gospel music and I play rock 'n' roll. Is it a sin to play rock 'n' roll music for a living?*

**Answer:** The question of whether playing rock and roll for a living is sinful or not sinful is really not the basic question confronting you. The real question is whether one can be consistent in playing gospel music and rock and roll music simultaneous. It seems to me that one must decide to either play gospel music or rock and roll. The two are totally incompatible. The profound sacred and spiritual meaning of the great music of the church must never be mixed with the transitory quality of rock and roll music. The former serves to lift men's souls to higher levels of reality, and therefore to God; the latter so often plunges men's minds into degrading and immoral depths. Therefore, I would say that you would be

giving your life to a more noble purpose if you concentrated on the music of the church rather than rock and roll. Never seek to mix the two.

Apr  
1958

**Question:** *Since Christianity became the official religion of the Roman Empire, the church has almost always been on the side of the rich, the powerful, and the prejudiced. Preachers and priests have ever been the defenders, the supporters of the status quo. In view of these facts, why do ministers maintain that Christianity coincides with the struggles of the disadvantaged peoples of the world?*

**Answer:** Honesty impels me to admit that the church has often been on the side of the rich, powerful, and prejudiced. The church has often been relegated to an institution which served to crystallize the patterns of the status quo. Even ministers of the gospel have often turned to the Bible to find some erroneous justification for the preservation of the old order. This, however, is not the whole church. The church at its best has always stood as the conscience of society. It has been willing to broaden horizons, challenge customs and even break mores. There has always been and always will be that section of the church that joins in the struggle of the disadvantaged and disinherited peoples of the world. Although they are far too few there are still those ministers who recognize that the power of the gospel can never be clothed in the garments of a particular class. Whenever the church is true to its genius it recognizes as Jesus did, that it must preach the gospel to the poor and deliver those who are captives.

**Question:** *I am in love with a young woman who is obviously unsuitable for me. On the other hand, I know another girl who wants to marry. I think the latter girl would be perfect for me, but I don't love her. We have the same background, the same tastes and we enjoy the same things. Should I marry her? Isn't romantic love, which is at best transitory, a slippery thing to bet your future on?*

**Answer:** I would not say that romantic love is merely transitory. Romantic love, at its best, is an enduring love which grows with the years. I do agree, however, that it is quite risky to base a marriage purely on so-called romantic love without taking other basic factors into account. For it may be possible that what we feel as real romantic love is at bottom a passing fantasy or a temporary infatuation with no real substance. Many marriages have broken up for this very reason. Persons marry on the basis of a temporary emotional feeling, and when the slightest conflict arises the marriage breaks up because it is not planted on a solid foundation. I think it would be far better for you to at least pursue the relationship with the young lady who has the same background and similar interests as you have. If you continue to associate with her it is altogether probable that you will grow to love her. At least with a similar background and similar interests, you have something basic and solid to build on. In the case of the first young lady that you mentioned you may simply have a feeling that may pass away with the wind.

**Question:** *My wife has no respect for my profession as an entertainer and believes I should get a more secure job that would permit me to spend more time with the children. I can't make her understand that my work is rewarding and that my possible success will provide greater security. Since the "job" problem is creating a crisis in our home, what should I do?*

**Answer:** If, as you say, your work is rewarding to you and has the possibility of greater economic security for the future, it would be well for you to patiently and

393

## The Martin Luther King, Jr. Papers Project

4 Apr  
1958

calmly attempt to convince your wife that you should stick with this profession. You must seek to get over to her that one's life work is much more meaningful and creative when it is something that the person enjoys doing. I can see how your wife would be desirous of your spending more time with the family and certainly you should seek to arrange your working schedule so that it will be possible to devote more time to your home life. In spite of this, however, you must seek to get your wife to see that it often takes a little time for people to get established in certain professions. Give her the example of the numerous persons who are now at the top of their professions, but who took several years to get established and secure.

PD. *Ebony*, April 1958, p. 104.