

In
Search
of...

Truth & Right

GENESIS

Tim Henderson, Editor

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"Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things." Phil. 4:8 (NASB-U)

A publication of the
**Wellsburg
church of Christ**
Which meets at:
112 Sunset Ave.
Wellsburg, WV 26070
304-737-1422

We appreciate so much your presence here with us today. We would like to extend an invitation to join us at any of our other times of worship.

TIMES OF SERVICES

SUNDAY

Bible Classes* 10:00 AM
AM Worship 10:45 AM
PM Worship 6:30 PM

WEDNESDAY

Bible Classes* 7:00 PM
(* Bible Classes for All Ages)

Today's Sermon:

*Consider Your
Ways & Rekindle
The Fire*

*Audio CD's are available
free of charge in the foyer.*

*Please visit our website:
www.truthandright.org*

*If you have any questions regarding
what we teach and practice, please
feel free to ask*

The Blessing and Danger of Humor

Stephen Rouse

So, you know what the first car mentioned in the Bible was, right? When the apostles were all in one Accord... Ha. Well, I will say that no matter whether you laughed at that or not, humor is a gift from God and should be used as such (James 1:17). Our ability to laugh, be sarcastic, and simply be light-hearted should be enjoyed and shared as the blessing God intended it to be. However, as with all of God's blessings, Satan has taken humor out of its God-given role and perverts it to use against us. And he's doing a mighty good job.

Humor as a Blessing

Used correctly and thoughtfully, humor can be a powerful tool in many areas. Proverbs 17:22 states that, *"A joyful heart is good medicine, But a broken spirit dries up the bones."* Humor can certainly be used to make a heart joyful, even for a short amount of time. At the right time, it can be used to brighten someone's day and encourage them to lift their head when they most need it, which we all need from time to time. While this may not be a purely spiritual form of encouragement, it can certainly help us to face our days with more joy and vigor

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as we seek to serve the Lord with all the zeal we can muster.

Humor can also be used to soften anger and avoid potential conflict with our brothers and sisters in Christ. Proverbs 15:1 tells us that *"A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger."* How many times have we snapped back at someone instead of taking a moment to consider our response to annoyance or aggravation? A well placed humorous comment can often help us to see the folly of our own frustrations and avoid unnecessary conflict with our brethren and those whom we associate with.

Humor also can function as a powerful evangelistic tool. Paul urges the Christians at Colosse to *"Conduct yourselves with wisdom toward outsiders, making the most of the opportunity. Let your speech always be with grace, as though seasoned with salt; so that you will know how you should respond to each person"* (Colossians 4:5-6). Humor naturally draws people closer to the one who makes them laugh. If you're meeting someone for the first time, and they're able to make you laugh right off the bat, you probably already feel closer and more comfortable with that person. This sharing in laughter can help to build trust and camaraderie in relationships, which is fertile soil for the seed of the gospel.

Humor as a Danger

Though we can see where God has given us our sense of humor to help us through hard times and help our relationships, it must not become a stumbling block to us at the same time. First of all, humor must *never* take the place of the truth (2 Timothy 4:3-4)! Many of those who claim to proclaim the word of God fill their lessons with little truth but with an abundance of side-splitting anecdotes—which keeps an audience listening, but does nothing for their souls. Once again, there is a balance here, because when it's

*"A joyful heart is good
medicine, But a broken
spirit dries up the bones."
Proverbs 17:22*

used correctly, humor can help open hearts to the truth, but it mustn't push the truth out.

Satan can also use humor to get us to be dishonest. The fool in Proverbs 26:18-19 is spoken of this way: *"Like a madman who throws firebrands, arrows, and death. So is the man who deceives his neighbor, and*

says, 'Was I not joking?'" There is a place for being sarcastic and playing tricks on our friends, but let us examine ourselves so that we don't let our merrymaking turn into sin. It's easy to let a 'white lie' slip for the sake of humor, but when we deceive someone legitimately and mar the truth, God takes it as though we're throwing *"firebrands, arrows, and death."* Don't let it go too far.

Satan also lets us use humor to avoid confrontation that *needs* to happen, such as confrontation with our own sin or problems that demand our action. One thing I've noted among some peers in high school is some of the funniest people are the people that are hurting the most on the inside. Instead of facing their problems and solving them, they simply laugh it off and hide under their humor to ease the pain—which ultimately will never fix their problem. The preacher in Ecclesiastes 7:2-4 tells us *"It is better to go to a house of mourning than to go to a house of feasting. Because that is the end of every man. And the living takes it to heart. Sorrow is better than laughter,*

for when a face is sad a heart may be happy. The mind of the wise is in the house of mourning, while the mind of fools is in the house of pleasure." Let us use humor to comfort one another in sorrow, but not so far as to hide from the reality of the problems that God lets us face.

Perhaps the biggest problem I've seen among Christians in dealing with humor is the way Satan uses humor to desensitize us to sin. Paul writes to the Christians at Ephesus in Ephesians 5:3-5, *"But immorality or any im-*

*"Like a madman who throws
firebrands, arrows, and death.
So is the man who deceives
his neighbor, and says, 'Was I
not joking?'" Proverbs 26:18-19*

Those Serving This Week

Sunday AM

Class Prayer	Matt Ferrell
Announcements	Chuck Isinghood
Song Leader	Harold Marshall
Scripture	Zechariah 1:12-21
Reader	Ken Prager
Prayer	Dan Marton
Speaker	Tim Henderson
Lord's Supper	
Bread	Don Coen, Jr.
Fruit of the Vine	Tim Henderson
Serve	Terry Smith
Serve	Blake Headen
Closing Prayer	Earl Miller

Please inform the one in charge of announcements if you are unable to fulfill your responsibilities.

Sunday PM

Announcements	Chuck Isinghood
Song Leader	Ed Roberts
Scripture	Zechariah 2
Reader	Blake Headen
1st Prayer	Earl Miller
Speaker	Tim Henderson
Communion	Dan Marton
Closing Prayer	Don Coen, Sr.

Wednesday

Announcements	Chuck Isinghood
Class Prayer	Matt Ferrell
Song Leader	Singing/Praying
Invitation	Ed Roberts
Closing Prayer	Don Coen, Jr.

News N Notes

Please continue to remember these in your prayers:

Traveling:

- Chuck Isinghood will be heading to Chicago this afternoon

Sick:

- Linda Marshall, Patience and Lincoln are all down with the flu

Prayer Requests:

- Merl Frey
- Zeda Goddard's sons, Dallas and Terry, and her daughter Tammy Garrison
- Blake Headen, Alberta's husband
- Virginia Malick, Peggy Miller's mother
- Alfred & Mary Jane Myers — Alfred continues to deal with back problems while Mary Jane is in Florida visiting her mother
- Ed Roberts as he continues to recover from a blood infection
- Jimmy Roberts, Ed & Marie's son
- Jim Roberts, Ed Roberts' father
- Marie Roberts
- Kris Shane
- Connie Shane

Don't forget our Shut-ins

Nursing Home:

- Ethel Mahan
- Pauline Sellers

At Home:

- Josephine Clow
- Mabel Fleming
- Zeda Goddard
- Betty Hunter
- Pauline Midcap
- Ann Rudolph

Send them a card—give them a call—let them know we are thinking about them.

If someone needs to be added to this list, please call:
304-914-2262 or 304-914-2263

purity of greed must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints; and there must be no filthiness and silly talk, or course jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks. For this you know with certainty, that no immoral or impure person or covetous man, who is an idolater, has an inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God." These are serious words, and we must take them seriously when we use words. It's become too easy to joke about things like drugs, alcohol, and homosexuality. Satan, through television and movies, has used this tactic ruthlessly until we no longer gasp or cringe or feel any kind of repulsion at the sin that is rotting millions of souls all around us. Instead, we laugh. Remember the town drunk in the Andy Griffith show? He was almost always found intoxicated, but he did the 'funniest' things. In reality, that lifestyle would destroy him and be something to mourn over, not laugh at. We must examine the things we entertain ourselves with and make sure we're not letting Satan whittle away at our consciences!

May God help each of us to see humor for the blessing and danger it is, and to use it always to build one another up and to glorify our God!

The Way We Are Gary Henry

"... for you are still carnal. For where there are envy, strife, and divisions among you, are you not carnal and behaving like mere men?"

1 Corinthians 3:3

When, as those who profess Christ, we continue to behave in spiritually immature ways, we should not make matters worse by making excuses. It does no good to minimize the seriousness of sinful decisions that we have made. I might like for my misdeeds

to be seen as nothing more than personal quirks or foibles, but unworthy character and unacceptable conduct can't be excused by saying, "Well, that's just the way I am."

It may well be true that one of my personal characteristics is a tendency in a certain sinful direction. I may, for example, be more prone to anger than my next-door neighbor. But the most important issue is not my nature — it's my character. NATURE is the package of tendencies that we were born with, but CHARACTER is what we've done WITH that package, and that's the only thing we'll be held accountable for at the judgment (2 Corinthians 5:10).

Most of us should go ahead and admit that we wouldn't be "the way we are" if we'd been working on our character in constructive ways while we had the chance. Paul was not complimenting the Corinthians when he said, "*You are still carnal.*" And in a similar vein, the writer of Hebrews said to his readers, "*For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food*" (Hebrews 5:12).

In whatever spiritual condition we find ourselves, God surely understands. He understands, but He also expects better things of us. He knows how hard it is to go against our personal tendencies, and He's eager to help. But He requires that we make an honest effort. As our Great Physician, He will take a more active approach than simply to give sympathy and say, "Well, I guess that's just the way you are." He gave His LIFE to get us OVER the way we are.

Our spiritual enemy is an awesome foe, but we can do more than roll over and play the victim. "*Resist the devil,*" James wrote, "*and he will flee from you*" (James 4:7). FORWARD is the direction we need to move, but we won't MOVE forward if we don't REACH forward. Let's do it without delay. No more excuses.

"'That's just the way I am' is a confession of sloth, not humility"
Gary L. Thomas