

QUALITY
OF
LIFE
BIBLE
STUDY



*Sense
of* **Humor**®

COMPILED BY
S.MCRAE

SENSE OF HUMOR

Quality of Life Series

LEADER: Mind if I tell a joke?

- Are you already wondering “On, no...what kind of joke is it?”
- Do I have to laugh?
- Wonder what group it will demean to make the point.
- Or what if it’s off color?
- Is it going to hurt someone’s feelings?
- What if I find it offensive...do I say something?

LEADER: They say you can tell the size of a man by what makes him angry... I further contend, you can tell the size of a person by what makes him laugh!

READER: “What’s So Funny?” Campus Journal

Source ~ <http://www.gospelcom.net/rbc/cj/cj-02-06-97.html> (Excerpt)

If a dirty joke shows up on TV instead of in a Christian publication, does that make it more acceptable? If a joke that makes fun of sin is told by Seinfeld instead of Branon, does that make it okay? If we feel uncomfortable thinking that good ol’ Campus Journal is going to get racy, then shouldn’t we be just as uncomfortable if a radio station, TV program, or movie is also crossing the line?

I like to laugh as much as the next guy. Actually, depending on who the next guy is, I probably like to laugh even more. I enjoy making people smile. Like when the waitress asks if I want “steamed rice” and I tell her I want it “moderately angry, but maybe not steamed.”

So, this is not about being a sour-faced Christian who looks like he sucked lemons for breakfast. It’s not about thinking it’s a sin to laugh.

This is about laughing at sin.

Sin, you’ll recall, nailed Jesus to the cross. To find sin amusing is to mock God, who found it so despicable that when our sin was on Jesus’ shoulders, He turned His face away.

Keeping sin away from our lives is hard work. Let’s not make things harder by laughing about it. (DB)

READER: Proverbs 14:9

Fools mock at sin But among the upright there is good will.

READER: “Laughter” by Brent Nidiffer and Jamie Shell

Source ~ http://www.heartlight.org/articles/200103/20010327_laughter.html EXERPT

“Our mouths were filled with laughter, our tongues with songs of joy. Then it was said among the nations, “The LORD has done great things for them.” - Psalm 126:2

Recently there was a report in the newspaper about a man who walked into a Circle-K, put a \$20 bill on the counter, and asked for change. When the clerk opened the cash drawer, the man pulled a gun and asked for all the cash in the register. The clerk promptly complied with the thief’s request. The man took the cash from the clerk and fled, leaving the \$20 bill on the counter. The total amount of cash he got from the drawer? Fifteen dollars!

Solomon reminds us, *“a cheerful heart is good medicine”* (Proverbs 17:22). While I’m not sure the stories we just shared make us cheerful, it sure feels good to get a good laugh at evil deeds getting their just reward. The wicked plots against the righteous; And gnashes at him with his teeth.

“The Lord laughs at him, For He sees his day is coming.” Psalm 37:12-13

Laughter, at the right time for the right things and for the right reasons, is a positive experience. We all need to laugh more in order to be physically healthy. Proverbs reminds us that it’s not a bad spiritual idea, either. We are a redeemed people who know what really matters in life. That means we can laugh.

Today, learn to lighten up and laugh at yourself, a cartoon, or a situation. Whatever it may be, seek out the lighter side of things today. I guarantee you'll feel better... for sure better than person robbing the Circle-K. Who knows, maybe a lot better than the person you looked at in the mirror this morning!

LEADER: Can you laugh at yourself...how about a ridiculous situation...can you see the humor or are you just irritated?

READER: "Laughing With Dad"

Source ~ http://www.sermonillustrator.org/illustrator/sermon2b/laughing_with_dad.htm

A couple of weeks ago, my dad, who is seventy -six, had total knee replacement surgery on his left knee. He came through the surgery just fine and although they told him he would be in the hospital five days he was able to leave in three. He had a local anesthetic and was able to see and hear everything that went on in the operating room.

Later in his room, he was laughing as he told the story of hearing the hammer and saw as they took out the bone. With a smile on his face and a mischievous glint in his eye, he advised the Dr's they needed 2 sharpen the saw, since he could smell the bone burning as they removed it, which of course meant the blade was dull.

He came home and is doing the exercises the therapist gave him and even when it hurts he manages to laugh at the pain and make jokes about the new metal knee being heavier, which makes it harder to lift, but lift, bend and move it he does.

The other day, one of the rubber tips on his walker wore out and not wanting to mar the carpet or the kitchen floor, he went to his shop to find a new rubber tip. I was visiting with my mom and after some time had passed we got concerned, so I went out to see if he was ok. I walked into the shop to find him sitting on the stool at his work bench laughing. I asked what in the world he was doing. He proceeded to explain that since the rubber tip he had gone to replace would not fit his walker he was changing legs. It seems Mom's walker, that she had used when she had double knee replacement surgery five years ago, was broken on the top, but the legs were better than the ones on his walker.

I asked what was so funny about that. He said he was stuck. Those legs wouldn't fit and now he couldn't get the one leg he had changed off and he couldn't get back to the house without his walker.

Together my dad, with the bum knee perched on his stool and I, with the crippled arms and hands, worked and worked laughing all the while. The more trouble we had the harder we laughed. We did finally get the walker fixed and got back to the house. We were both tired and feeling the physical pain, but we had created a wonderful soul soothing, heart warning memory. I have been fortunate enough to have many such minutes with my dad.

You have a choice about how you let life affect you. You can moan, groan, wallow in self pity and be miserable. Or, you can focus on things beyond the pain and hurt life brings, find the humor and look for the positives. That is a lesson I have learned from both my parents. If I could go back and pick my parents, I wouldn't hesitate for a minute, I'd pick them.

READER: "Carol Burnett"

Source ~ <http://www.higherpraise.org/illustrations/humor.htm>

Actress Carol Burnett got out of a cab one day and caught her coat in the door. The driver was unaware of her plight and slowly began to edge out into traffic. To keep from being pulled off her feet, the comedienne had to run alongside down the block. A passerby noted her predicament and quickly alerted the driver. He stopped, jumped out, and released Miss Burnett's coat. "Are you all right?" he asked anxiously. "Yes," she gasped, "but how much more do I owe you?"

READER: QUOTE #1

Source ~ <http://www.entwagon.com/cgi-bin/quotes/quotes.pl?cat=Humor>

"A person without a sense of humor is like a wagon without springs-jolted by every pebble in the road." - Henry Ward Beecher 1813-1887 Preacher/Author

READER: QUOTE #2

Source ~ http://www.cybernation.com/victory/quotations/subjects/quotes_laughter.html

“You grow up on the day you have your first real laugh at, yourself.” - Ethel Barrymore 1879 – 1959 Stage/Screen/TV Actress

READER: QUOTE #3

Source ~ <http://www.christianglobe.com/Illustrations/theDetails.asp?whichOne=l&whichFile=laughter>

“Happy is the person who can laugh at himself. He will never cease to be amused.” - Habib Bourguiba. President of Tunisia from 1957 to 1987

READER: QUOTE #4

Source ~ http://www.amusingquotes.com/h//Laughter_1.htm

“A day without laughter is a day wasted.” - Charlie Chaplin 1189-1977, Master of the Silent Screen

READER: QUOTE #5

Source ~ <http://www.gospelcom.net/rbc/cj/cj-05-02-02.shtml>

“Laughter has great face value.” - unknown

LEADER: Did you know laughter is medicinal?

READER: “Anatomy of an Illness” Today in the Word

Source ~ <http://www.christianglobe.com/Illustrations/theDetails.asp?whichOne=l&whichFile=laughter>

In *The Anatomy of an Illness: As Perceived by the Patient*, Norman Cousins tells of being hospitalized with a rare, crippling disease. When he was diagnosed as incurable, Cousins checked out of the hospital. Aware of the harmful effects that negative emotions can have on the body, Cousins reasoned the reverse was true. So he borrowed a movie projector and prescribed his own treatment, consisting of Marx Brothers films and old “Candid Camera” reruns. It didn’t take long for him to discover that 10 minutes of laughter provided two hours of pain-free sleep. Amazingly, his debilitating disease was eventually reversed. After the account of his victory appeared in the *New England Journal of Medicine*, Cousins received more than 3000 letters from appreciative physicians throughout the world.

READER: “A Prescription For You” by Rubel Shelly

Source ~ http://www.heartlight.org/articles/200103/20010327_prescription.html

Several studies have been done on the value of a positive attitude toward life for physical, emotional, and spiritual health. A quarter century ago, for example, Norman Cousins wrote about his personal experience of recovery from a debilitating illness and attributed it to laughter. The editor of *Saturday Review*, Cousins’ experience received widespread attention. He was even invited to teach on the faculty of a respected medical school.

Cousins spoke of laughter to embrace the entire range of positive human emotions. He didn’t believe that laughing at dirty jokes, for example, had a curative power over heart disease or cancer. He simply observed what all of us sense about negative emotions setting the stage for illness. From that premise, he reasoned that such positive emotions as cheerfulness, hope, playfulness, humor, faith, and love could have a therapeutic value to human beings.

Now a new study from the University of Maryland Medical Center reaffirms that thesis. “We know that anger and mental stress impair the endothelium — the protective barrier lining our blood vessels,” says the lead researcher. “This can cause fat and cholesterol buildup in the coronary arteries. But laughter may have the opposite effect — it may stimulate elements that protect the endothelium.”

Insurance companies aren’t willing yet to pay for your video rental of *Patch Adams* or to buy you a whoopee cushion. But it is a prescription each of us can write for herself to laugh early and laugh often.

During the dark days of the Civil War, Abraham Lincoln was criticized more than once for his use of humor. “With the fearful strain that is on me,” replied the president, “if I did not laugh, I should die!”

G.K. Chesterton put it this way: “Life is serious all the time, but living cannot be. You may have all the solemnity you wish in your neckties, but in anything important — such as sex, death, or religion — you must have mirth or you will have madness.” I suspect he was right.

“HE WHO LAUGHS, LASTS.”

Long before medical research verified it, the Bible said this: *“A cheerful heart is good medicine, but a crushed spirit dries up the bones”* (Proverbs 17:22).

Are you stressed out? A good, hearty laugh could be just what the doctor ordered. And you'll have the chance, for you'll be with yourself all day. The ability to lighten up and laugh at your own foibles is a very healthy prescription.

READER: QUOTE #6

Source ~ <http://www.quotationspage.com/subjects/humor/>

“Always laugh when you can. It is cheap medicine. “ - Lord Byron 1788-1824 Poet

READER: QUOTE #7

Source ~ <http://www.quotationspage.com/subjects/humor/>

“Laughter is inner jogging.” - Norman Cousins 1912-1990 Editor Saturday Review/Author, Professor of Medical Humanities at the UCLA School of Medicine

READER: “Digestive Laughter” By Paul Lewis

Source ~ <http://www.christianglobe.com/Illustrations/theDetails.asp?whichOne=l&whichFile=laughter>

Laughter improves any meal--experts even say it aids digestion. Ask everyone in your family to contribute five riddles or humorous quotations, etc. on slips of paper. Keep them in a jar on the table and during dinner take turns drawing them out and reading them.

READER: QUOTE #8

Source ~ http://www.cybernation.com/victory/quotations/subjects/quotes_laughter.html

“People who laugh actually live longer than those who don't laugh. Few persons realize that health actually varies according to the amount of laughter.” - Dr. James Walsh

LEADER: “Laughter Statistic” Youth Worker Update, Signs of the Times

Source ~ <http://www.christianglobe.com/Illustrations/theDetails.asp?whichOne=l&whichFile=laughter>

While the average child laughs 150 times a day, say researchers at the University of Michigan, the average adult laughs only 15 times.

Perhaps we should look for delight in the little things of life as a child does...finding joy in the moment.

READER: QUOTE #9

Source ~ http://www.cybernation.com/victory/quotations/subjects/quotes_laughter.html

“There is a form of laughter that springs from the heart, heard every day in the merry voice of childhood, the expression of a laughter -- loving spirit that defies analysis by the philosopher, which has nothing rigid or mechanical in it, and totally without social significance. Bubbling spontaneously from the heart of child or man. Without egotism and full of feeling, laughter is the music of life.” - Sir William Osler 1849-1919 Called most influential physician in history

READER: “How To Cultivate A Sense of Humor”

Source ~ <http://www.bible.org/illus/h/h-66.htm#TopOfPage> (LEADER CALLS OUT #s)

1. Catch yourself in some amusing inconsistency and then laugh at yourself. This is the foundation of a healthy sense of humor.
2. Note the inappropriate or funny things people say or do in public, and draw parallels between those silly behaviors and your own. Positive humor goes beyond mere criticism to a recognition of our common plight as less-than-perfect human beings.
3. Include in your regular reading diet published collections of wit and humor, humor columnists, comic strips, and stories by writers with a well-developed sense of humor.
4. Occasionally do something harmlessly absurd and totally out of character for your spontaneous entertainment.
5. Avoid sarcasm, ridicule, and excessive teasing. They hurt rather than heal.

READER: QUOTE #10

Source ~ <http://www.quotationspage.com/subjects/humor/>

“A sense of humor is part of the art of leadership, of getting along with people, of getting things done.” - Dwight D. Eisenhower 34TH President of the US

READER: “How Do You Measure Success?” By Ralph Waldo Emerson

Source ~ <http://www.gospelcom.net/rbc/cj/cj-07-12-00.shtml>

To laugh often and much;

To win the respect of intelligent people and the affection of children;

To earn the appreciation of honest critics and endure the betrayal of false friends;

To appreciate beauty;

To find the best in others;

To leave the world a bit better whether by a healthy child, a redeemed social condition, or a job well done;

To know even one other life has breathed because you lived--this is to have succeeded.

READER: “Erma Bombeck” By Rubel Shelly

Source ~ <http://www.sermonillustrator.org/illustrator/sermon1/erma.htm>

She was a homemaker who became a nationally known author, speaker, and syndicated columnist. Among her bestsellers were *The Grass Is Always Greener Over the Septic Tank* and *When You Look Like Your Passport Photo, It's Time to Go Home*. Some of her humor could make even cynics laugh hysterically.

A woman who could write that way must have had an easy life, huh? All she had to do was think up jokes, write them down, and collect her royalties, right? Wrong. Bad wrong!

Erma Bombeck's father died when she was only nine years old. At 20 she was found to have a hereditary kidney disorder that would eventually lead to kidney failure. (Two of her three children have inherited the problem.) In 1991 she had breast cancer and underwent a mastectomy. In 1993 she started four-times-a-day peritoneal dialysis until a kidney transplant April 4. Complications from the transplant took her life last Monday.

When fans wrote to say, “Things like this shouldn't happen to you,” she had an answer. “Why not me?” she said. “I had a good long ride with it. I have written all these books with kidney problems. ... It doesn't affect your brain. It doesn't affect your sense of humor.”

I suspect her sense of humor was a coping device. It helped her deal with her pain. It kept her from getting brittle and grumpy. It helped her live 69 years in a positive rather than negative way, with joy rather than self-pity.

People who succeed with life tend to have a great sense of humor. It gets them through the tough times. Remember when Ronald Reagan was shot in 1981? “Honey, I forgot to duck,” he told Nancy at the hospital. To the surgeons about to operate on him, he said, “Please tell me you're Republicans.”

A sense of humor is great therapy when you hit a bump in the road -- and everybody's road has some bumps. As Erma Bombeck put it, “There is something about getting on with your life.” She might have added -- with a smile whenever you can manage it.

READER: Proverbs 17:22

A joyful heart is good medicine, But a broken spirit dries up the bones

READER: QUOTE #11

Source ~ <http://www.quotationspage.com/subjects/humor/>

“Humor is the great thing, the saving thing. The minute it crops up, all our irritations and resentments slip away and a sunny spirit takes their place.” - Mark Twain 1835-1910 Author/Humorist

READER: “The Clown's Prayer”

Source ~ http://www.sermonillustrator.org/illustrator/sermon2/clown's_prayer.htm

As I stumble through this life,
help me to create more laughter than tears,

dispense more cheer than gloom,
spread more cheer than despair.

Never let me become so indifferent,
that I will fail to see the wonders in the eyes of a child,
or the twinkle in the eyes of the aged.

Never let me forget that my total effort is to cheer people,
make them happy, and forget momentarily,
all the unpleasantness in their lives.

And in my final moment,
may I hear You whisper:
“When you made My people smile,
you made me smile.”

READER: Ephesians 5:1-12

Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children; and walk in love, just as Christ also loved you and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma. But immorality or any impurity or greed must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints; and there must be no filthiness and silly talk, or coarse 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. Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. Therefore do not be partakers with them; for you were formerly darkness, but now you are Light in the Lord; walk as children of Light (for the fruit of the Light consists in all goodness and righteousness and truth), trying to learn what is pleasing to the Lord. Do not participate in the unfruitful deeds of darkness, but instead even expose them; for it is disgraceful even to speak of the things which are done by them in secret.

LEADER: Have you ever witnessed or been a part of making a joke of someone?...

or perhaps you were on the receiving end. How did it feel? Children especially can be so cruel in their quest for popularity...finding another to demean...or even intentionally ignoring someone, rolling their eyes when their name is mentioned...causing another to snicker. As adults we can be guilty on a different level...and we should no better.

READER: “The Greatest Pain in Life”

Source ~ <http://www.sermonillustrator.org/illustrator/sermon1/greatestpain.htm>

The greatest pain in life is not to die, but to be ignored.
To lose the person you love so much to another who doesn't care at all.
To have someone you care so about so much throw a party... and not tell you about it.
When your favorite person on earth neglects to invite you to his graduation.
To have people think that you don't care.

The greatest pain in life, is not to die, but to be forgotten.
To be left in the dust after another's great achievement.
To never get a call from a friend, just saying “hi”.
When you show someone your innermost thoughts and they laugh in your face.
For friends to always be too busy to console you when you need someone to lift your spirits.
When it seems like the only person who cares about you, is you.

Life is full of pain, but does it ever get better?
Will people ever care about each other, and make time for those who are in need?
Each of us has a part to play in this great show we call life.
Each of us has a duty to mankind to tell our friends we love them.
To laugh with them not at them.
If you do not care about your friends you will not be punished.
You will simply be ignored...forgotten...as you have done to others.

* This poem was written by a young girl who committed suicide a few years ago. Perhaps if the people surrounding her had shown a little more love, and had paid more attention to her, her death could have been

prevented. Remember that when going through life, you can't judge a sad, lonely, or suicidal person by their facial expression. You need to get to know each person you come in contact with, cherish your friendship with them, and show them that you care....(editor's note: and laugh with them...not at them.)

READER: "Not Worth a \$20 Bill"

Source ~ [http://www.sermonillustrator.org/illustrator/sermon2b/not_worth_a_\\$20_bill.htm](http://www.sermonillustrator.org/illustrator/sermon2b/not_worth_a_$20_bill.htm)

It had been difficult for her family back in the 1960's. Thus she arranged a part-time job at \$20 per night to share her bed with strangers; she would receive enough money to feed her three children. But her world came crashing down on her when she found out she was pregnant with her fourth.

She sought out her former English teacher who had befriended her back in high school. This lady would be able to pay for doctor bills and medication. When the baby was born, this young mother told her teacher, "I do not want this child. He is not worth the twenty dollars I received. You take him." So this baby, Reggie Dabbs, was raised by an English teacher who had a wonderful heart for the students she taught in school.

Reggie Dabbs grew up like many other American boys but he did not know his father and seldom saw his mother. The English teacher took good care of him but deep down, Reggie realized who he was: he was not worth a twenty dollar bill. This hurt, making him unhappy and depressed.

But then, something happened to Reggie. He came to realize that even though he may not have been worth \$20, there was a Person who could change him and make him worth more than he could imagine. This Person transformed him beyond his imagination. Just as this English teacher adopted him, this Jesus would adopt Reggie and allow him to be part of a wonderful beginning--an amazing career in speaking at schools everywhere. He writes:

"I speak in public schools almost every day of the school year. They call me a motivational speaker, but what I really do is shine my light. Every time I speak, every time I make kids laugh, I see someone who can't smile. I see someone who is not happy, who needs love. That is exactly what your light is. It is the love of God shining through you, literally lighting up your school or job or whatever mission field God has given you to light and love and fill with laughter and the joy of Christ. (last sentence rewritten for adult Bible Study)

Think about this, out of all the students in your school, He chose you to share Christ with them. (John 17:20-23) So stand up, light your lantern, and LET IT SHINE!"

Reggie Dabbs, worth less than a 20-dollar bill, had the misfortune of not knowing his parents. But he decided to follow the Light and LET IT SHINE in the thousands of schools he visits. Leaving a trail of love, laughter and light, he enables students and friends to become aware that they are worth considerably more in the eyes of God.

Yes, God has paid a price for you and I when He allowed His only Son, Jesus Christ, to die on the cross for our sins. Jesus did not just die for those who are born in well-to-do families but He died for the worthless and poor, even for those who are the product of sin. And then He arose again. It really makes so much sense to follow Him and be welcomed into the family of God?

READER: QUOTE #12

Source ~ http://www.cybernation.com/victory/quotations/subjects/quotes_humor.html

"If I had no sense of humor, I would long ago have committed suicide." - Mahatma Gandhi 1869-1948 Indian Leader/Humanitarian

READER: "Eighteen Years Later" By Michael T. Powers

Source ~ http://www.sermonillustrator.org/illustrator/sermon2/eighteen_years_later.htm

Junior high is probably the worst time in young people's lives. Bodies are changing in ways they never thought possible, and they spend most of their time trying to fit into a mold that peers have formed for them. Gone are the days of Elmer's glue, crayons, and the tiny scissors with the rounded edges. (Yes, they are trusted with the sharp-edged scissors in junior high.) From here on out, they have their own lockers, carry their books to each class, and start making their own decisions about which classes to take.

What I remember most about junior high, however, was the incredible pain and heartache that students inflicted on one another with their words and actions. There were students who seemed to have it all together, and made those around them feel as if they didn't measure up. It wasn't until much later that I

learned that those who ripped on others suffered from a terrible self-image, so in order to make themselves feel better, they tore others down. In fact, they were usually a totally different person from the one they presented to the outside world.

I didn't have the best self-image in junior high, and there were two things that I fell back on to be accepted: athletics and humor. I have always been a decent athlete, which brought a certain confidence and comfort level in my life, and I have always been able to make people laugh. At times the laughter came at another's expense, unfortunately, and most times I didn't fully realize what I was doing to the self-images of those around me, particularly one classmate of mine.

Her name was Tracy and she had a crush on me. Instead of nicely letting her know that I wasn't interested in her, I got caught up in trying to be funny, with her being the brunt of my jokes. I am ashamed now to think of how I treated her in seventh grade. I went out of my way to make things miserable for her. I made up songs about her, and even wrote short stories in which I had to save the world from Tracy the evil villain.

That all changed about half way through the year, however. Mr. Greer, my physical education teacher, came up to me one day.

"Hey, Mike, you got a second?"

"Sure, Mr. Greer!" I said. Everybody loved Mr. Greer, and I looked up to him like a father.

"Mike, I heard a rumor that you were going around picking on Tracy?" He paused and looked me straight in the eye. It seemed like an eternity before he continued. "You know what I told the person I heard that from? I told them it couldn't possibly be true. The Mike Powers I know would never treat another person like that. Especially a young lady."

I gulped, but said nothing.

He gently put his hand on my shoulder and said, "I just thought you should know that." Then he turned and walked away without a backward glance, leaving me to my thoughts.

That very day I stopped picking on Tracy.

I knew that the rumor was true, and that I had let my role-model down by my actions. More importantly, though, it made me realize how badly I must have hurt this girl and others for whom I had made life difficult.

It was probably a couple of months later before I fully realized the incredible way in which Mr. Greer had handled the problem. He not only made me realize the seriousness of my actions, but he did it in a way that helped me to save some of my pride. My respect and love for him grew even stronger after that.

I don't think I ever apologized to Tracy for my hurtful words and actions. She moved away the next year, and I never saw her again. While I was very immature as a seventh grader, I still should have known better. In fact, I did know better, but it took the wisdom of my favorite teacher to bring it out into the light.

So, Tracy, if you're out there, I am truly sorry for the way that I treated you, and I ask for your forgiveness--something I should have done eighteen years ago.

READER: Proverbs 26:13-19

*The sluggard says, "There is a lion in the road!
A lion is in the open square!"*

*As the door turns on its hinges,
So does the sluggard on his bed.*

*The sluggard buries his hand in the dish;
He is weary of bringing it to his mouth again.*

*The sluggard is wiser in his own eyes
Than seven men who can give a discreet answer.*

*Like one who takes a dog by the ears
Is he who passes by and meddles with strife not belonging to him.*

*Like a madman who throws
Firebrands, arrows and death,*

*So is the man who deceives his neighbor,
And says, "Was I not joking?"*

READER: "Helpful Humor" Our Daily Bread

Source ~ <http://www.gospelcom.net/rbc/odb/odb-05-05-95.html>

How can you say to your brother, "Let me remove the speck from your eye"; and look, a plank is in your own eye -- Matthew 7:4

Humor can be cruel and offensive, but it can also be kind and helpful. I have used it in sermons to make a point or in meetings to break the tension. I have also profited from humor when it pointed out my faults.

Recently, while watching a film series on family living, I laughed at the comical examples of foibles and failures to which we as husbands are so prone. Yet even though I was amused, I saw enough of myself in these funny situations to feel convicted. As a result, I think I'll be a better husband from now on--and after more than 50 years of marriage!

God gave us the gift of humor and the capacity to laugh. I believe Jesus had a twinkle in His eye when He said that a person should take the plank out of his own eye before trying to remove a speck of sawdust from the eye of someone else (Mt. 7:4). I can just see His listeners smile and hear them laugh softly. But I'm sure they also understood His point, and some may have been convicted about their own judgmental attitude.

Similarly, the writer of Proverbs portrayed a lazy man in three exaggerated word pictures (26:13-16). They are humorous, but they drive home a solemn warning.

Try using humor to help--never to hurt. --HVL

Give us a sense of humor, Lord,
Give us the grace to laugh and smile;
But check our lips from needless jest
That what we speak may be worthwhile. --Anon.

HUMOR CAN MAKE A SERIOUS DIFFERENCE

READER: "The Seven Wonders" By Alan Smith

Source ~ http://www.sermonillustrator.org/illustrator/sermon2c/seven_wonders.htm

I heard about a group of Geography students who studied the Seven Wonders of the World. At the end of that section, they students were asked to list what they each considered to be the Seven Wonders of the World. Though there was some disagreement, the following got the most votes: Egypt's Great Pyramid, the Taj Mahal, the Grand Canyon, the Panama Canal, the Empire State Building, St. Peter's Basilica and China's Great Wall.

While gathering the votes, the teacher noted that one student, a quiet girl, hadn't turned in her paper yet. So she asked the girl if she was having trouble with her list. The quiet girl replied,

"Yes, a little. I couldn't quite make up my mind because there were so many."

The teacher said, "Well, tell us what you have, and maybe we can help."

The girl hesitated, then read, "I think the Seven Wonders of the World are to touch and to taste, to see and to hear . . . " She hesitated a little, "and then to run and to laugh and to love."

It is far too easy for us to look at the exploits of man and refer to them as "wonders" while we overlook all that God has done, regarding them as merely "ordinary." May you be reminded today of those things which are truly wondrous.

"I will remember the works of the LORD; Surely I will remember Your wonders of old. I will also meditate on all Your work, and talk of Your deeds.....Who is so great a God as our God? You are the God who does wonders." (Psalm 77:11-14a).

Praise be to "the God who does wonders"!

READER: “The First Day of School”

Source ~ http://www.sermonillustrator.org/illustrator/sermon2/first_day_of_school.h

The first day of school our professor introduced himself and challenged us to get to know someone we didn't already know. I stood up to look around when a gentle hand touched my shoulder. I turned around to find a wrinkled, little old lady beaming up at me with a smile that lit up her entire being.

She said, “Hi handsome. My name is Rose. I'm eighty seven years old. Can I give you a hug?”

I laughed and enthusiastically responded, “Of course you may!” and she gave me a giant squeeze.

“Why are you in college at such a young, innocent age?” I asked.

She jokingly replied, “I'm here to meet a rich husband, get married, have a couple of children, and then retire and travel.”

“No seriously,” I asked. I was curious what may have motivated her to be taking on this challenge at her age.

“I always dreamed of having a college education and now I'm getting one!” she told me.

After class we walked to the student union building and shared a chocolate milkshake. We became instant friends. Every day for the next three months we would leave class together and talk non-stop. I was always mesmerized listening to this “time machine” as she shared her wisdom and experience with me.

Over the course of the year, Rose became a campus icon and easily made friends wherever she went. She loved to dress up and she revelled in the attention bestowed upon her from the other students. She was living it up.

At the end of the semester we invited Rose to speak at our football banquet and I'll never forget what she taught us. She was introduced and stepped up to the podium. As she began to deliver her prepared speech, she dropped her three by five cards on the floor.

Frustrated and a little embarrassed she leaned into the microphone and simply said “I'm sorry. I'm so jittery. I gave up beer for Lent and this whiskey is killing me! I'll never get my speech back in order so let me just tell you what I know.”

As we laughed she cleared her throat and began:

“We do not stop playing because we are old; we grow old because we stop playing. There are only four secrets to staying young, being happy, and achieving success.

“You have to laugh and find humor every day. You've got to have a dream. When you lose your dreams, you die. We have so many people walking around who are dead and don't even know it!”

“There is a huge difference between growing older and growing up. If you are nineteen years old and lie in bed for one full year and don't do one productive thing, you will turn twenty years old. If I am eighty seven years old and stay in bed for a year and never do anything I will turn eighty eight. Anybody can grow older. That doesn't take any talent or ability.

The idea is to grow up by always finding the opportunity in change.” “Have no regrets. The elderly usually don't have regrets for what we did, but rather for things we did not do. The only people who fear death are those with regrets.”

She concluded her speech by courageously singing “The Rose.” She challenged each of us to study the lyrics and live them out in our daily lives.

At the years end Rose finished the college degree she had begun all those years ago. One week after graduation Rose died peacefully in her sleep. Over two thousand college students attended her funeral in tribute to the wonderful woman who taught by example that it's never too late to be all you can possibly be.

LEADER: What did you get from the story of Rose?

- It's never too late to try something
- You're never too old to learn.
- Always find the opportunity to grow and change.

- Have no regrets for things you didn't do.
- Dream
- Laugh and find humor in every day.

LEADER: "Risking"

Source ~ <http://www.sermonillustrator.org/illustrator/sermon1a/risking.htm>

To laugh is to risk appearing the fool.
 To weep is to risk appearing sentimental.
 To reach out for another is to risk involvement.
 To expose feelings is to risk exposing your true self.

To place your ideas, your dreams, before a crowd is to risk their loss.
 To love is to risk not being loved in return.
 To live is to risk dying.
 To hope is to risk failure.

But risks must be taken.
 Because the greatest hazard in life is to risk nothing.
 If you risk nothing and do nothing, you dull your spirit.
 You may avoid suffering and sorrow,
 But you cannot learn, feel, change, grow, love, and live.

Chained by your attitude, you are a slave.
 You have forfeited your freedom.
 Only if you risk are you free.
 So today...laugh, weep, love, hope so you can feel, change, grow, love and live.

LEADER: "Maybe you don't feel like laughing, growing, living... by His grace you can.

READER: "Only By His Grace" By Sarah Berthelson

Source ~ http://www.sermonillustrator.org/illustrator/sermon7/only_by_his_grace.htm

Only by my wonderful Savior's grace
 That I am at peace and happy in this place

There have been heartache, sickness and death
 In my world that I have experienced this year

Only by his grace can I sing and laugh today
 He is always listening and answering as I pray

He did not promise that all would be contentment
 That is the reason I feel his presence and have no resentment

There should be no bitterness when things go wrong
 He should not get blamed for all the times I am not strong

How often I blame God for the situation I am in
 It is not his fault that I have chosen to sin

Only by his wonderful grace I have the peace within
 I am so thankful that he was with me through it all

He touched my brow with his tender touch
 When I needed him most, he let me know he loved me so very much

Only by his grace I can sit and write
 Only by his grace that I have my sight

Only by his grace can I sing and laugh today
 He is always listening and answering as I pray

READER: Job 8:21a

He will yet fill your mouth with laughter.

LEADER: “It’s Up To You” WIT & WISDOM

Source ~ <http://www.sermonillustrator.org/illustrator/sermon1/it'supto.htm>

One song can spark a moment,
One flower can wake the dream.
One tree can start a forest,
One bird can herald spring.

One smile begins a friendship,
One handclasp lifts a soul.
One star can guide a ship at sea,
One word can frame the goal.

One vote can change a nation,
One sunbeam lights a room.
One candle wipes out darkness,
One laugh will conquer gloom.

One step must start each journey,
One word must start each prayer.
One hope will raise our spirits,
One touch can show you care.

One voice can speak with wisdom,
One heart can know what’s true,
One life can make the difference,
You see, it’s up to you!

COMMENTS IF TIME:

**ALLOW TIME BEFORE CLOSING FOR
PRAYER REQUESTS AND PRAISES:**

COPY AND DISTRIBUTE THE FOLLOWING PAGES FOR YOUR READERS

READERS

“What’s So Funny?”

If a dirty joke shows up on TV instead of in a Christian publication, does that make it more acceptable? If a joke that makes fun of sin is told by Seinfeld instead of Branon, does that make it okay? If we feel uncomfortable thinking that good ol’ Campus Journal is going to get racy, then shouldn’t we be just as uncomfortable if a radio station, TV program, or movie is also crossing the line?

I like to laugh as much as the next guy. Actually, depending on who the next guy is, I probably like to laugh even more. I enjoy making people smile. Like when the waitress asks if I want “steamed rice” and I tell her I want it “moderately angry, but maybe not steamed.”

So, this is not about being a sour-faced Christian who looks like he sucked lemons for breakfast. It’s not about thinking it’s a sin to laugh.

This is about laughing at sin.

Sin, you’ll recall, nailed Jesus to the cross. To find sin amusing is to mock God, who found it so despicable that when our sin was on Jesus’ shoulders, He turned His face away.

Keeping sin away from our lives is hard work. Let’s not make things harder by laughing about it.
(DB)

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Proverbs 14:9

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“**Laughter**” by Brent Nidiffer and Jamie Shell

“Our mouths were filled with laughter, our tongues with songs of joy. Then it was said among the nations, “The LORD has done great things for them.” - Psalm 126:2

Recently there was a report in the newspaper about a man who walked into a Circle-K, put a \$20 bill on the counter, and asked for change. When the clerk opened the cash drawer, the man pulled a gun and asked for all the cash in the register. The clerk promptly complied with the thief’s request. The man took the cash from the clerk and fled, leaving the \$20 bill on the counter. The total amount of cash he got from the drawer? Fifteen dollars!

Solomon reminds us, *“a cheerful heart is good medicine”* (Proverbs 17:22). While I’m not sure the stories we just shared make us cheerful, it sure feels good to get a good laugh at evil deeds getting their just reward. The wicked plots against the righteous; And gnashes at him with his teeth.

“The Lord laughs at him, For He sees his day is coming.” Psalm 37:12-13

Laughter, at the right time for the right things and for the right reasons, is a positive experience. We all need to laugh more in order to be physically healthy. Proverbs reminds us that it’s not a bad spiritual idea, either. We are a redeemed people who know what really matters in life. That means we can laugh.

Today, learn to lighten up and laugh at yourself, a cartoon, or a situation. Whatever it may be, seek out the lighter side of things today. I guarantee you’ll feel better... for sure better than person robbing the Circle-K. Who knows, maybe a lot better than the person you looked at in the mirror this morning!

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“Laughing With Dad”

A couple of weeks ago, my dad, who is seventy -six, had total knee replacement surgery on his left knee. He came through the surgery just fine and although they told him he would be in the hospital five days he was able to leave in three. He had a local anesthetic and was able to see and hear everything that went on in the operating room.

Later in his room, he was laughing as he told the story of hearing the hammer and saw as they took out the bone. With a smile on his face and a mischievous glint in his eye, he advised the Dr’s they needed 2 sharpen the saw, since he could smell the bone burning as they removed it, which of course meant the blade was dull.

He came home and is doing the exercises the therapist gave him and even when it hurts he manages to laugh at the pain and make jokes about the new metal knee being heavier, which makes it harder to lift, but lift, bend and move it he does.

The other day, one of the rubber tips on his walker wore out and not wanting to mar the carpet or the kitchen floor, he went to his shop to find a new rubber tip. I was visiting with my mom and after some time had passed we got concerned, so I went out to see if he was ok. I walked into the shop to find him sitting on the stool at his work bench laughing. I asked what in the world he was doing. He proceeded to explain that since the rubber tip he had gone to replace would not fit his walker he was changing legs. It seems Mom’s walker, that she had used when she had double knee replacement surgery five years ago, was broken on the top, but the legs were better than the ones on his walker.

I asked what was so funny about that. He said he was stuck. Those legs wouldn’t fit and now he couldn’t get the one leg he had changed off and he couldn’t get back to the house without his walker.

Together my dad, with the bum knee perched on his stool and I, with the crippled arms and hands, worked and worked laughing all the while. The more trouble we had the harder we laughed. We did finally get the walker fixed and got back to the house. We were both tired and feeling the physical pain, but we had created a wonderful soul soothing, heart warning memory. I have been fortunate enough to have many such minutes with my dad.

You have a choice about how you let life affect you. You can moan, groan, wallow in self pity and be miserable. Or, you can focus on things beyond the pain and hurt life brings, find the humor and look for the positives. That is a lesson I have learned from both my parents. If I could go back and pick my parents, I wouldn’t hesitate for a minute, I’d pick them.

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“Carol Burnett”

Actress Carol Burnett got out of a cab one day and caught her coat in the door. The driver was unaware of her plight and slowly began to edge out into traffic. To keep from being pulled off her feet, the comedienne had to run alongside down the block. A passerby noted her predicament and quickly alerted the driver. He stopped, jumped out, and released Miss Burnett’s coat. “Are you all right?” he asked anxiously. “Yes,” she gasped, “but how much more do I owe you?”

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QUOTE #1

“A person without a sense of humor is like a wagon without springs-jolted by every pebble in the road.” - Henry Ward Beecher 1813-1887 Preacher/Author

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QUOTE #2

“You grow up on the day you have your first real laugh at, yourself.” - Ethel Barrymore 1879 – 1959 Stage/Screen/TV Actress

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QUOTE #3

“Happy is the person who can laugh at himself. He will never cease to be amused.” - Habib Bourguiba. President of Tunisia from 1957 to 1987

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QUOTE #4

“A day without laughter is a day wasted.” - Charlie Chaplin 1189-1977, Master of the Silent Screen

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QUOTE #5

“Laughter has great face value.” - unknown

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“Anatomy of an Illness”

In *The Anatomy of an Illness: As Perceived by the Patient*, Norman Cousins tells of being hospitalized with a rare, crippling disease. When he was diagnosed as incurable, Cousins checked out of the hospital. Aware of the harmful effects that negative emotions can have on the body, Cousins reasoned the reverse was true. So he borrowed a movie projector and prescribed his own treatment, consisting of Marx Brothers films and old “Candid Camera” reruns. It didn’t take long for him to discover that 10 minutes of laughter provided two hours of pain-free sleep. Amazingly, his debilitating disease was eventually reversed. After the account of his victory appeared in the *New England Journal of Medicine*, Cousins received more than 3000 letters from appreciative physicians throughout the world.

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“A Prescription For You” by Rubel Shelly

Several studies have been done on the value of a positive attitude toward life for physical, emotional, and spiritual health. A quarter century ago, for example, Norman Cousins wrote about his personal experience of recovery from a debilitating illness and attributed it to laughter. The editor of *Saturday Review*, Cousins’ experience received widespread attention. He was even invited to teach on the faculty of a respected medical school.

Cousins spoke of laughter to embrace the entire range of positive human emotions. He didn’t believe that laughing at dirty jokes, for example, had a curative power over heart disease or cancer. He simply observed what all of us sense about negative emotions setting the stage for illness. From that premise, he reasoned that such positive emotions as cheerfulness, hope, playfulness, humor, faith, and love could have a therapeutic value to human beings.

Now a new study from the University of Maryland Medical Center reaffirms that thesis. “We know that anger and mental stress impair the endothelium — the protective barrier lining our blood vessels,” says the lead researcher. “This can cause fat and cholesterol buildup in the coronary arteries. But laughter may have the opposite effect — it may stimulate elements that protect the endothelium.”

Insurance companies aren’t willing yet to pay for your video rental of Patch Adams or to buy you a whoopee cushion. But it is a prescription each of us can write for herself to laugh early and laugh often.

During the dark days of the Civil War, Abraham Lincoln was criticized more than once for his use of humor. “With the fearful strain that is on me,” replied the president, “if I did not laugh, I should die!”

G.K. Chesterton put it this way: “Life is serious all the time, but living cannot be. You may have all the solemnity you wish in your neckties, but in anything important — such as sex, death, or religion — you must have mirth or you will have madness.” I suspect he was right.

“HE WHO LAUGHS, LASTS.”

Long before medical research verified it, the Bible said this: “*A cheerful heart is good medicine, but a crushed spirit dries up the bones*” (Proverbs 17:22).

Are you stressed out? A good, hearty laugh could be just what the doctor ordered. And you’ll have the chance, for you’ll be with yourself all day. The ability to lighten up and laugh at your own foibles is a very healthy prescription.

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QUOTE #6

“Always laugh when you can. It is cheap medicine. “ - Lord Byron 1788-1824 Poet

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QUOTE #7

“Laughter is inner jogging.” - Norman Cousins 1912-1990 Editor Saturday Review/Author, Professor of Medical Humanities at the UCLA School of Medicine

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“**Digestive Laughter**” By Paul Lewis

Laughter improves any meal--experts even say it aids digestion. Ask everyone in your family to contribute five riddles or humorous quotations, etc. on slips of paper. Keep them in a jar on the table and during dinner take turns drawing them out and reading them.

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QUOTE #8

“People who laugh actually live longer than those who don’t laugh. Few persons realize that health actually varies according to the amount of laughter.” - Dr. James Walsh

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“**Laughter Statistic**”

While the average child laughs 150 times a day, say researchers at the University of Michigan, the average adult laughs only 15 times.

Perhaps we should look for delight in the little things of life as a child does...finding joy in the moment.

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QUOTE #9

“There is a form of laughter that springs from the heart, heard every day in the merry voice of childhood, the expression of a laughter -- loving spirit that defies analysis by the philosopher, which has nothing rigid or mechanical in it, and totally without social significance. Bubbling spontaneously from the heart of child or man. Without egotism and full of feeling, laughter is the music of life.” - Sir William Osler 1849-1919 Called most influential physician in history

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“**How To Cultivate A Sense of Humor**”

1. Catch yourself in some amusing inconsistency and then laugh at yourself. This is the foundation of a healthy sense of humor.
2. Note the inappropriate or funny things people say or do in public, and draw parallels between those silly behaviors and your own. Positive humor goes beyond mere criticism to a recognition of our common plight as less-than-perfect human beings.
3. Include in your regular reading diet published collections of wit and humor, humor columnists, comic strips, and stories by writers with a well-developed sense of humor.
4. Occasionally do something harmlessly absurd and totally out of character for your spontaneous entertainment.
5. Avoid sarcasm, ridicule, and excessive teasing. They hurt rather than heal.

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QUOTE #10

“A sense of humor is part of the art of leadership, of getting along with people, of getting things done.” - Dwight D. Eisenhower 34TH President of the US

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“How Do You Measure Success?” By Ralph Waldo Emerson

To laugh often and much;
To win the respect of intelligent people and the affection of children;
To earn the appreciation of honest critics and endure the betrayal of false friends;
To appreciate beauty;
To find the best in others;
To leave the world a bit better whether by a healthy child, a redeemed social condition, or a job well done;
To know even one other life has breathed because you lived--this is to have succeeded.

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“Erma Bombeck” By Rubel Shelly

She was a homemaker who became a nationally known author, speaker, and syndicated columnist. Among her bestsellers were *The Grass Is Always Greener Over the Septic Tank* and *When You Look Like Your Passport Photo, It's Time to Go Home*. Some of her humor could make even cynics laugh hysterically.

A woman who could write that way must have had an easy life, huh? All she had to do was think up jokes, write them down, and collect her royalties, right? Wrong. Bad wrong!

Erma Bombeck's father died when she was only nine years old. At 20 she was found to have a hereditary kidney disorder that would eventually lead to kidney failure. (Two of her three children have inherited the problem.) In 1991 she had breast cancer and underwent a mastectomy. In 1993 she started four-times-a-day peritoneal dialysis until a kidney transplant April 4. Complications from the transplant took her life last Monday.

When fans wrote to say, "Things like this shouldn't happen to you," she had an answer. "Why not me?" she said. "I had a good long ride with it. I have written all these books with kidney problems. ... It doesn't affect your brain. It doesn't affect your sense of humor."

I suspect her sense of humor was a coping device. It helped her deal with her pain. It kept her from getting brittle and grumpy. It helped her live 69 years in a positive rather than negative way, with joy rather than self-pity.

People who succeed with life tend to have a great sense of humor. It gets them through the tough times. Remember when Ronald Reagan was shot in 1981? "Honey, I forgot to duck," he told Nancy at the hospital. To the surgeons about to operate on him, he said, "Please tell me you're Republicans."

A sense of humor is great therapy when you hit a bump in the road -- and everybody's road has some bumps. As Erma Bombeck put it, "There is something about getting on with your life." She might have added -- with a smile whenever you can manage it.

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Proverbs 17:22

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QUOTE #11

"Humor is the great thing, the saving thing. The minute it crops up, all our irritations and resentments slip away and a sunny spirit takes their place." - Mark Twain 1835-1910 Author/Humorist

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“The Clown’s Prayer”

As I stumble through this life,
help me to create more laughter than tears,
dispense more cheer than gloom,
spread more cheer than despair.

Never let me become so indifferent,
that I will fail to see the wonders in the eyes of a child,
or the twinkle in the eyes of the aged.

Never let me forget that my total effort is to cheer people,
make them happy, and forget momentarily,
all the unpleasantness in their lives.

And in my final moment,
may I hear You whisper:
“When you made My people smile,
you made me smile.”

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Ephesians 5:1-12

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“The Greatest Pain in Life”

The greatest pain in life is not to die, but to be ignored.
To lose the person you love so much to another who doesn’t care at all.
To have someone you care so about so much throw a party... and not tell you about it.
When your favorite person on earth neglects to invite you to his graduation.
To have people think that you don’t care.

The greatest pain in life, is not to die, but to be forgotten.
To be left in the dust after another’s great achievement.
To never get a call from a friend, just saying “hi”.
When you show someone your innermost thoughts and they laugh in your face.
For friends to always be too busy to console you when you need someone to lift your spirits.
When it seems like the only person who cares about you, is you.

Life is full of pain, but does it ever get better?
Will people ever care about each other, and make time for those who are in need?
Each of us has a part to play in this great show we call life.
Each of us has a duty to mankind to tell our friends we love them.
To laugh with them not at them.
If you do not care about your friends you will not be punished.
You will simply be ignored...forgotten...as you have done to others.

* This poem was written by a young girl who committed suicide a few years ago. Perhaps if the people surrounding her had shown a little more love, and had paid more attention to her, her death could have been prevented. Remember that when going through life, you can’t judge a sad, lonely, or suicidal person by their facial expression. You need to get to know each person you come in contact with, cherish your friendship with them, and show them that you care....(editor’s note: and laugh with them...not at them.)

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“Not Worth a \$20 Bill”

It had been difficult for her family back in the 1960's. Thus she arranged a part-time job at \$20 per night to share her bed with strangers; she would receive enough money to feed her three children. But her world came crashing down on her when she found out she was pregnant with her fourth.

She sought out her former English teacher who had befriended her back in high school. This lady would be able to pay for doctor bills and medication. When the baby was born, this young mother told her teacher, “I do not want this child. He is not worth the twenty dollars I received. You take him.” So this baby, Reggie Dabbs, was raised by an English teacher who had a wonderful heart for the students she taught in school.

Reggie Dabbs grew up like many other American boys but he did not know his father and seldom saw his mother. The English teacher took good care of him but deep down, Reggie realized who he was: he was not worth a twenty dollar bill. This hurt, making him unhappy and depressed.

But then, something happened to Reggie. He came to realize that even though he may not have been worth \$20, there was a Person who could change him and make him worth more than he could imagine. This Person transformed him beyond his imagination. Just as this English teacher adopted him, this Jesus would adopt Reggie and allow him to be part of a wonderful beginning--an amazing career in speaking at schools everywhere. He writes:

“I speak in public schools almost every day of the school year. They call me a motivational speaker, but what I really do is shine my light. Every time I speak, every time I make kids laugh, I see someone who can't smile. I see someone who is not happy, who needs love. That is exactly what your light is. It is the love of God shining through you, literally lighting up your school or job or whatever mission field God has given you to light and love and fill with laughter and the joy of Christ. (last sentence rewritten for adult Bible Study)

Think about this, out of all the students in your school, He chose you to share Christ with them. (John 17:20-23) So stand up, light your lantern, and LET IT SHINE!”

Reggie Dabbs, worth less than a 20-dollar bill, had the misfortune of not knowing his parents. But he decided to follow the Light and LET IT SHINE in the thousands of schools he visits. Leaving a trail of love, laughter and light, he enables students and friends to become aware that they are worth considerably more in the eyes of God.

Yes, God has paid a price for you and I when He allowed His only Son, Jesus Christ, to die on the cross for our sins. Jesus did not just die for those who are born in well-to-do families but He died for the worthless and poor, even for those who are the product of sin. And then He arose again. It really makes so much sense to follow Him and be welcomed into the family of God?

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QUOTE #12

“If I had no sense of humor, I would long ago have committed suicide.” - Mahatma Gandhi 1869-1948 Indian Leader/Humanitarian

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“Eighteen Years Later” By Michael T. Powers

Junior high is probably the worst time in young people’s lives. Bodies are changing in ways they never thought possible, and they spend most of their time trying to fit into a mold that peers have formed for them. Gone are the days of Elmer’s glue, crayons, and the tiny scissors with the rounded edges. (Yes, they are trusted with the sharp-edged scissors in junior high.) From here on out, they have their own lockers, carry their books to each class, and start making their own decisions about which classes to take.

What I remember most about junior high, however, was the incredible pain and heartache that students inflicted on one another with their words and actions. There were students who seemed to have it all together, and made those around them feel as if they didn’t measure up. It wasn’t until much later that I learned that those who ripped on others suffered from a terrible self-image, so in order to make themselves feel better, they tore others down. In fact, they were usually a totally different person from the one they presented to the outside world.

I didn’t have the best self-image in junior high, and there were two things that I fell back on to be accepted: athletics and humor. I have always been a decent athlete, which brought a certain confidence and comfort level in my life, and I have always been able to make people laugh. At times the laughter came at another’s expense, unfortunately, and most times I didn’t fully realize what I was doing to the self-images of those around me, particularly one classmate of mine.

Her name was Tracy and she had a crush on me. Instead of nicely letting her know that I wasn’t interested in her, I got caught up in trying to be funny, with her being the brunt of my jokes. I am ashamed now to think of how I treated her in seventh grade. I went out of my way to make things miserable for her. I made up songs about her, and even wrote short stories in which I had to save the world from Tracy the evil villain.

That all changed about half way through the year, however. Mr. Greer, my physical education teacher, came up to me one day.

“Hey, Mike, you got a second?”

“Sure, Mr. Greer!” I said. Everybody loved Mr. Greer, and I looked up to him like a father.

“Mike, I heard a rumor that you were going around picking on Tracy?” He paused and looked me straight in the eye. It seemed like an eternity before he continued. “You know what I told the person I heard that from? I told them it couldn’t possibly be true. The Mike Powers I know would never treat another person like that. Especially a young lady.”

I gulped, but said nothing.

He gently put his hand on my shoulder and said, “I just thought you should know that.” Then he turned and walked away without a backward glance, leaving me to my thoughts.

That very day I stopped picking on Tracy.

I knew that the rumor was true, and that I had let my role-model down by my actions. More importantly, though, it made me realize how badly I must have hurt this girl and others for whom I had made life difficult.

It was probably a couple of months later before I fully realized the incredible way in which Mr. Greer had handled the problem. He not only made me realize the seriousness of my actions, but he did it in a way that helped me to save some of my pride. My respect and love for him grew even stronger after that.

I don’t think I ever apologized to Tracy for my hurtful words and actions. She moved away the next year, and I never saw her again. While I was very immature as a seventh grader, I still should have known better. In fact, I did know better, but it took the wisdom of my favorite teacher to bring it out into the light.

So, Tracy, if you’re out there, I am truly sorry for the way that I treated you, and I ask for your forgiveness--something I should have done eighteen years ago.

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Proverbs 26:13-19

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“Helpful Humor”

How can you say to your brother, “Let me remove the speck from your eye”; and look, a plank is in your own eye -- Matthew 7:4

Humor can be cruel and offensive, but it can also be kind and helpful. I have used it in sermons to make a point or in meetings to break the tension. I have also profited from humor when it pointed out my faults.

Recently, while watching a film series on family living, I laughed at the comical examples of foibles and failures to which we as husbands are so prone. Yet even though I was amused, I saw enough of myself in these funny situations to feel convicted. As a result, I think I’ll be a better husband from now on--and after more than 50 years of marriage!

God gave us the gift of humor and the capacity to laugh. I believe Jesus had a twinkle in His eye when He said that a person should take the plank out of his own eye before trying to remove a speck of sawdust from the eye of someone else (Mt. 7:4). I can just see His listeners smile and hear them laugh softly. But I’m sure they also understood His point, and some may have been convicted about their own judgmental attitude.

Similarly, the writer of Proverbs portrayed a lazy man in three exaggerated word pictures (26:13-16). They are humorous, but they drive home a solemn warning.

Try using humor to help--never to hurt. --HVL

Give us a sense of humor, Lord,
Give us the grace to laugh and smile;
But check our lips from needless jest
That what we speak may be worthwhile. --Anon.

HUMOR CAN MAKE A SERIOUS DIFFERENCE



“The Seven Wonders” By Alan Smith

I heard about a group of Geography students who studied the Seven Wonders of the World. At the end of that section, they students were asked to list what they each considered to be the Seven Wonders of the World. Though there was some disagreement, the following got the most votes: Egypt’s Great Pyramid, the Taj Mahal, the Grand Canyon, the Panama Canal, the Empire State Building, St. Peter’s Basilica and China’s Great Wall.

While gathering the votes, the teacher noted that one student, a quiet girl, hadn’t turned in her paper yet. So she asked the girl if she was having trouble with her list. The quiet girl replied,

“Yes, a little. I couldn’t quite make up my mind because there were so many.”

The teacher said, “Well, tell us what you have, and maybe we can help.”

The girl hesitated, then read, “I think the Seven Wonders of the World are to touch and to taste, to see and to hear . . . “ She hesitated a little, “and then to run and to laugh and to love.”

It is far too easy for us to look at the exploits of man and refer to them as “wonders” while we overlook all that God has done, regarding them as merely “ordinary.” May you be reminded today of those things which are truly wondrous.

“I will remember the works of the LORD; Surely I will remember Your wonders of old. I will also meditate on all Your work, and talk of Your deeds.....Who is so great a God as our God? You are the God who does wonders.” (Psalm 77:11-14a).

Praise be to “the God who does wonders”!



“The First Day of School”

The first day of school our professor introduced himself and challenged us to get to know someone we didn't already know. I stood up to look around when a gentle hand touched my shoulder. I turned around to find a wrinkled, little old lady beaming up at me with a smile that lit up her entire being.

She said, “Hi handsome. My name is Rose. I'm eighty seven years old. Can I give you a hug?”

I laughed and enthusiastically responded, “Of course you may!” and she gave me a giant squeeze.

“Why are you in college at such a young, innocent age?” I asked.

She jokingly replied, “I'm here to meet a rich husband, get married, have a couple of children, and then retire and travel.”

“No seriously,” I asked. I was curious what may have motivated her to be taking on this challenge at her age.

“I always dreamed of having a college education and now I'm getting one!” she told me.

After class we walked to the student union building and shared a chocolate milkshake. We became instant friends. Every day for the next three months we would leave class together and talk non-stop. I was always mesmerized listening to this “time machine” as she shared her wisdom and experience with me.

Over the course of the year, Rose became a campus icon and easily made friends wherever she went. She loved to dress up and she revelled in the attention bestowed upon her from the other students. She was living it up.

At the end of the semester we invited Rose to speak at our football banquet and I'll never forget what she taught us. She was introduced and stepped up to the podium. As she began to deliver her prepared speech, she dropped her three by five cards on the floor.

Frustrated and a little embarrassed she leaned into the microphone and simply said “I'm sorry. I'm so jittery. I gave up beer for Lent and this whiskey is killing me! I'll never get my speech back in order so let me just tell you what I know.”

As we laughed she cleared her throat and began:

“We do not stop playing because we are old; we grow old because we stop playing. There are only four secrets to staying young, being happy, and achieving success.

“You have to laugh and find humor every day. You've got to have a dream. When you lose your dreams, you die. We have so many people walking around who are dead and don't even know it!”

“There is a huge difference between growing older and growing up. If you are nineteen years old and lie in bed for one full year and don't do one productive thing, you will turn twenty years old. If I am eighty seven years old and stay in bed for a year and never do anything I will turn eighty eight. Anybody can grow older. That doesn't take any talent or ability.

The idea is to grow up by always finding the opportunity in change.” “Have no regrets. The elderly usually don't have regrets for what we did, but rather for things we did not do. The only people who fear death are those with regrets.”

She concluded her speech by courageously singing “The Rose.” She challenged each of us to study the lyrics and live them out in our daily lives.

At the years end Rose finished the college degree she had begun all those years ago. One week after graduation Rose died peacefully in her sleep. Over two thousand college students attended her funeral in tribute to the wonderful woman who taught by example that it's never too late to be all you can possibly be.

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“Only By His Grace” By Sarah Berthelson

Source ~ http://www.sermonillustrator.org/illustrator/sermon7/only_by_his_grace.htm

Only by my wonderful Savior's grace
That I am at peace and happy in this place

There have been heartache, sickness and death
In my world that I have experienced this year

Only by his grace can I sing and laugh today
He is always listening and answering as I pray

He did not promise that all would be contentment
That is the reason I feel his presence and have no resentment

There should be no bitterness when things go wrong
He should not get blamed for all the times I am not strong

How often I blame God for the situation I am in
It is not his fault that I have chosen to sin

Only by his wonderful grace I have the peace within
I am so thankful that he was with me through it all

He touched my brow with his tender touch
When I needed him most, he let me know he loved me so very much

Only by his grace I can sit and write
Only by his grace that I have my sight

Only by his grace can I sing and laugh today
He is always listening and answering as I pray

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Job 8:21a

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