



Chuckle, Smile and Snicker Some

"There is a time ...to laugh." —Ecclesiastes 3:4

A Seattle third grade teacher was testing her class on the parts of the human body. All of the pupils passed her test except for one. When asked what the body was composed of, this sandy-haired, freckled-face lad voiced his response: *"The human body is composed of three parts: the brainium, borax, and abominable cavity. The brainium contains the brain. The borax contains the lungs, liver, and the living things. And the abominable cavity contains the bowels of which there are five—a, e, i, o, and u."*

Got a question... would your friends say that you possess a healthy sense of humor? Are you a fun person to be around? Do you love to laugh with your buddies? Did you know that having joy inside is a wonderful gift from God? Even our Lord was filled joy-filled and He gladly expressed it upwards:

"Then Jesus was filled with the joy of the Holy Spirit and said, 'O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, thank you'" (Lk. 10:21).

Though Christ understood what mourning and tears were about; though He was, ***"despised and rejected by men, a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief"***, I bet (if a Christian can say that..) that there were times when Jesus laughed out loud with a hardy belly laugh and even made his disciples begin to chuckle. He knew about jollity and mirth too. Some of the most godly men and women I have ever met just about put me on the floor with their humor.

Spiritual giants like Charles Haddon Spurgeon and Martin Luther were very humorous. Luther once kidded, *"If they don't allow laughter in heaven then I don't want to go there."* He then added, *"If the earth is fit for laughter then surely heaven is filled with it. Heaven is the birthplace of laughter."* Spurgeon was once approached by the elders of his church and asked to tone down his humor in the pulpit. The great English expositor replied, *"Gentlemen, if you only knew how much I held back!"*

Bill and Vonette Bright (who started Campus Crusade for Christ) enjoyed laughing with each other a lot. They would pick on each other sometimes, but not in a hurtful way. Have you ever heard Chuck Swindoll, pastor, author, and radio personality live at Stonebriar Church or somewhere? He goes right up to the edge of propriety and walks that tightrope of a line with his joking around ... and according to the religious folk's estimation of him,

he goes well over the edge with his humor and so called "vulgar language" (yup, "buns," and "heck"). He does this especially when he is with his sister Luci too.

Lucy Swindoll once shared a funny story with some ladies about a time in her youth when she "taught" Chuck how to "smoke"! She rolled up some paper, had her younger brother put one end in his mouth, commanded him to inhale and then swallow at the time when she lit up the other end. Well, Luci lit it and flames shot right up and burned Chuck's big white-man lips and His tongue! Well, it's funny to them now! Lucy claims that she is the one that first got him "on fire for God!" But Chuck has people who love his robust laugh almost as much as his preaching! His hero, Howard Hendricks, a respected professor at Dallas Theological Seminary, peppers his messages with hilarious stories too and some of the funniest facial expressions you've ever seen. My ex-alcoholic dad isn't religious either. He loves the Lord now too, and he can also tell some hilarious stories of what he and his drunken buddies used to do in a haze. He doesn't glorify his past life or go into all the gory details that we shouldn't hear, but he is lowly and relatable to people struggling with different addictions, people who want to learn to walk with the Lord and learn to laugh at themselves. He talks of how most of his friends would misplace their cars when the bars closed—that's goes hand-in-hand with that lifestyle. But one drunk was a train conductor with the Union Pacific Railroad who would stop in Indo California to frequent his favorite bar and later on at 2:30 AM when it was time to go, he would misplace his train. He couldn't figure out where he parked it. For real!

He will fill your mouth with laughter and your lips with shouts of joy. —Job 8:21

Laughter is the sun that drives winter from the human face. —Victor Hugo

Faith, mighty faith, the promise sees, and looks to God alone; laughs at impossibilities, and cries it shall be done. —Charles Wesley

My joke-telling is so weak and pathetic, because I can never keep a straight face as I should. The people look at me all puzzled and I'm the only one laughing before I even get to the punch line and if I make it that far, I often forget a key line that's needed.

I live in Texas where we have strange prehistoric creatures—some that chase you! Have you ever seen an armadillo up close? My wife and I were sitting on a bench by a lake one day and one came barreling through the brush and right up to stop and join us at the bench. Man, it was so blind; it didn't even know we were there until it was sitting with us sniffing an inch away from me. Those things look funny! I must have smelled bad, 'cause it ran for dear life when it took a sniff of me.

Have you ever seen a baboon up close and personal before, or a hyena ...or me early in the morning before I've found my way to the coffee machine?

How about you in the morning? Can you honestly say that God doesn't have a sense of humor? Abraham Lincoln said, *"God must have meant for us to laugh, or else He would not have made so many mules, parrots, monkeys, and human beings."*

He likes it when His children laugh. God wants you and me to lighten up at times and even be able to laugh at ourselves instead of being all serious every day. He wants you to enjoy a sense of humor and be a blessing to be around.

I'm so thankful to Him and to my prankster-friends who keep me laughing ..until my side hurts. We don't laugh at people's pain, or at smut, or at the truth ...or even around those who are suffering loss and need our ministry. But life never seems to get so bad (and it's gotten pretty painful real fast before..) that we can't find at least one thing to laugh about. The Bible clearly says that God experiences joy and that there are some things that He laughs about? Go check it out!

The world sadly doesn't have that infectious evangelistic joy and rejoicing of Jesus at all, but most of those in the world would love to encounter a seven-day-a-week-Christian with such authentic celebration inside. I pray that you and I will be like that! Sinners loved to hang out with Jesus—let Him live big in you. He so enjoyed being with them and they knew it. He didn't even lower His standards, but they respected Him. Living exceedingly joyful in a joyless world; living right-side-up in an upside-down-culture; living pure in a perverse society—that true excitement! And that's why we can't help but to go tell people the Good News wherever we go! Joy and victory are the natural outgrowths of a life that's both forgiven and vertically connected!

With the fearful strain that is on me night and day, if I did not laugh I should die.
—Abraham Lincoln

Whosoever trusteth in the Lord, happy is he. —Proverbs 16:20

There is a thin line that separates laughter and pain, comedy and tragedy, humor and hurt. When humor goes, there goes civilization. —Erma Bombeck

Yes way, such heavenly happiness is very attractive in our world, especially now when there is so much that's most shocking, criminally atrocious, intensely unbelievable and radically nasty! How can we be expected to be heavenly minded with all that's happening around us? The daily news reports and stress send some people into a tail-spin of sorts, to the point where they feel like giving up. Simply doing life makes them feel like crying instead of singing praises.

I read today that one in three people are depressed and that young people especially are prone to this ...as well as to having suicidal thoughts. Why? People feel incredibly lonely, frustrated and guilty. We live in such alienating

and anomic communities now. Social instability is at an all time high. Americans, including our leaders, have forgotten God for the most part. Many Christians have also taken a stride from their Master's side. Values and standards have eroded.

The CDC did a study looking at prescribed drugs. Of the 2.4 billion drugs prescribed in America, 118 million were for antidepressants. Since its introduction in 1988, Prozac has become the most widely prescribed drug in the world. Prozac sales have exceeded \$1 billion annually. Cities are very anonymous desperate places now where you and I are devalued; where gang activity and corruption have increased. Where can people find proper fulfillment, satisfaction and relief? And Kurt, how can you say that we should laugh? Did you know that ***"Elijah was a man just like us,"***? James tells us this (Jam. 5:17, niv). And not only was Elijah, that great man of faith, similar to us in that he was weak and emotional, he was like us that we imperfect people can be used mightily by the Lord. God can powerfully use our honest prayers just like He did with Elijah's. He was like us in that we can grow very down and discouraged to the point where we need the Lord to intervene. You remember how he ran from the terroristic threats against his life that came from an enemy. Yes, Elijah, this great man of God and overcomer, was reduced to a heap of self-pity by a woman, but God wasn't finished with him yet (1 Kings 19). Are you depressed and think that Jesus is finished with you?

You can choose to rejoice always, praise the Lord and delight yourself in Him even if you don't feel like it. Listen, even in the middle of horrific circumstances when the outlook has grown bad-to-the-bone, real Christians are trying the up-look ...and receiving love, joy and peace! God brings order, purpose, and meaning into their chaos. You know that's what you really want too! And [the Prince of peace is waiting](#) with arms open wide.

I'm against unwholesome cheap laughter. The crude jesting and degrading bathroom-humor among even Christians ...and it's found in so many blockbuster movies and reality TV shows that they enjoy. It turns me off. It grieves the Holy Spirit too! People wonder why they wake up feeling lower than the carpet and I feel for them. I'm no doctor and won't try to explain all the ramifications of the depressed—it's more complex than my brain can grasp on to. But the Bible warns against filthy humor—it's non-edifying. The Word says: ***"Let there be no sexual immorality, impurity, or greed among you. Such sins have no place among God's people. Obscene stories, foolish talk, and coarse jokes—these are not for you. Instead, let there be thankfulness to God"*** (Eph. 5:4). But wholesome laughter with good communication is constructive—it's a wonderful endowment from the Lord and you can not put a price tag on it! That's what I'm for.

Hey, I'm a realist that lives in a sin-cursed fallen world where decent and innocent people often become real victims. I don't live in the clouds with a harp or some pie-in-the-sky delusion of grandeur. I do run into deluded

people in denial from time to time, but that's not how I am. I never want to go bury my head in the sand pro-avoidance-style just to escape when big problems are looming ...or insensitively laugh at another's expense ...or merely for the sake of flippantly laughing like God is making me do it with some liver-quiver jerking, as some so called saints in *"laughing revivals"* do—you know that kind of weirdness. Bible teaching goes on the far back burner and no one gets saved. It's hype, it's religious, it's showy *"fake it 'til I make it"* jive.

I have a lot to learn, but did you know that it's been psychologically documented, that laughter along with having a well-rounded sense of humor in a person is one of the sure signs of intelligence. I saw this in an interesting TV documentary. Laughter releases chemicals in our bodies called endorphins that serve as painkillers to a degree.

Proverbs 15:13 says, ***"A merry heart maketh a cheerful countenance: but by sorrow of the heart the spirit is broken."*** Having a merry heart inside will express itself right. It's having the God-given ability to capture, appreciate and enjoy all the wonderful times of life and then let it turn into laughter. The Bible says there's, ***"A time to cry and a time to laugh. A time to grieve and a time to dance"*** (Eccl. 3:4). That's right, there's a time to dance about all filled up with exuberance! Jesus said, ***"God blesses you who weep now, for the time will come when you will laugh with joy"*** (Lk. 6:21).

Hey, be open to chuckling, smiling and snickering some more. People might wonder what you got away with.

Has God used any of Kurt's fishing devos to bless you? Has He used you to spread the Gospel lately? [Let Kurt know](#) how it happened!

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