



Fish With The Joy Of Jesus

There is a time for everything, a season for every activity under heaven... a time to cry and a time to laugh. —Eccl. 3:1-4

Do you feel that too many people as well as Christians are taking themselves too seriously these days? Maybe you feel that too many are joking around too much.

I've run into some on both sides of the issue and seek for a balance. There's no time for the laughter of compromise or prolonged depression sessions when God wants us to get over it. Coarse jesting, crude joking, hurtful humor at another's expense—that stuff is out! Sure we want to be creative, but we never try and win people to Christ using smut (see [Eph. 5:4](#)).

Let's talk about it. It's ok sometimes to poke fun at yourself, and be self-abasing minus the foolish self-deprecation. Sure some Christians are uber-silly and goofy all the time and that kind of stuff wears on people's nerves—especially their employer's. But too many Christians are mostly sullen, inverted and morose these days. They're against too much—yup, all up in arms against stuff that's not even sin or error. The world sees them as prudishly negative sour bigots. We Christians are known for what we can't stand, more than for what we are for. But we really need to follow the Spirit's lead and joyously communicate *what we're for sometimes* ...and never in some condemning hateful way.

Are you bored and down a lot? Maybe it's time for a break to go look in the mirror! I do that and I'm convinced that God's not uptight. What I see convinces me that He has a huge sense of humor. Sinner love to hang out with joyous saints.

God has blessed me with a couple friends like that, who role with the blows that life deals out—they role-model Christ's joy for me and others consistently. They take life as it comes, in an upbeat winsome fashion. They stay sweet when things quickly go rancid. Sometimes I cause them some blows too when things get too mundane. Not too bad, but they seem to like it when I pick on them... and they also pick on me right back.

None of my friends enjoy how I sing though ..like a skilled, animated, agile rock-star that's movin' about—yep, *got it going on* and they quickly get movin' on too. Of course I would never want to say their names here, but.. hey guys; cheer up Russ, Bill, and Dave.. we all can't dance so serious like a pro or be all buff, handsome and gifted.(1)

But Christians can get feeling low as well, and we certainly don't need to fake it during times like that (that's when it's time to pray). But it seems like some saints won't let go

of their valued dejection session. Do they equate “holy” to being some pitiful poor-me-kind-of-beat-down type of person?

God calls us to be sensitive around people who are weak and hurting. He calls us to weep with those cryin’ real crocodile tears and feeling pain. Sometimes I talk straight with those who cry too much though ..ya know, whining for awwws, pity, attention and a self-benefiting show.

Jesus was *R-E-A-L* as could be and I can’t see where He ever felt sorry for Himself or recruited sympathy. Things weren’t always peachy for Him, but Christ was and is the perfect man—a man’s man who is joyous. He was described as **“a man of sorrows,”** intimately acquainted with grief (read [Isaiah 53:3](#)).

It’s kind of hard to fathom, but even the incarnate sinless Son of the living God learned and grew through the heartaches that He suffered (see [Hebrews 5:8](#)). As we think about Christ’s sorrow and His concern for our sorrows, we can gain a better appreciation for what the Lord is trying to accomplish in and through us ...through the grief we bear. But hey gang, Jesus’ earthly existence wasn’t all sorrow. He could adjust to every situation that He encountered when He casually strolled along with people down here. And get this ...He was the type who was predominantly off-the-chain joyous. His obedient communion with the Father was ceaseless. That’s a key. I really bet ..so to speak... that Jesus laughed more than what was even close to being acceptable with the religious affiliates of His day. Are you like that?

Of course others seem to try and work up a sort of contrived, spooky sort of reViVaL joy at times ..when our land is in real need of authentic awakening and spiritual renewal. Yup, more than a decent leader even. We don’t need a religiously strange and giddy kind of laughter ..like some have claimed to enjoy all *“drunk in the Spirit.”* Man, the Spirit [never gets off on seeing or making people drunk!](#) Those Christians in Acts simply had gobs of J-O-Y rather than beer or wine in them ..as they went out witnessing from the upper room! We in the Church need to get all our thoughts in the right place again. We need to get in the Word, let it get in us and simply put on the mind of Christ.

*Are you always letting rubbish from TV be poured into your mind?
Are you too busy for Jesus, for relaxation or fun? Are your priorities consistent with biblical values? Set
aside some time this week for family, friends, and fishing.
All work and no joy seems to be an evil ploy...all pay and no pray or play,
..that will take all the joy and laughter away.*

*When God leads you through valleys of trouble, His omnipotent hand we can trace;
For the trials and sorrows He sends us lead to valuable lessons of joy and grace. —Anon.*

I like what Adrian Rogers used to say: *“Humor is a way of saying ‘I am not ok, and you’re not ok, but that’s ok. God loves us anyway!’”* Believer, we are living in a fallen, sin-cursed world where lots of sad junk goes down; where reversals, and bad inequitable things happen, but there are still a lot of things that I find still appropriate to break out in laughter about too.

My wife and I never want to laugh at the hurting and struggling people—no, NO—those around us who need tender nurturing, gentle admonitions and encouragement. We want to cheer them up by God's grace. Of all people, Christians should be uplifting and we want to make a difference.

*Laughter is a remedy for sorrow and for care;
It brings joy to troubled souls, to damaged hearts, repair.* —Sper

God consoles those who mourn with *“beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning,
the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness.”* —Isa 61:3

A merry heart does good, like medicine. —Proverbs 17:22

You can make a difference too, and be a part of the Solution rather than a part of the problem down here. You can witness by your holy life, by your good attitude, by proper honest communication, by respectful attentive listening, by tactfulness, by faithful loyalty ...and through hardy *L-A-U-G-H-E-R* that springs up from the belly ..that's natural rather than forced... or from a mirth that's low key so as not to disturb others at times ...and sometimes outright hilarity that's reverberating and over the top!

When you are in touch with the Lord all through the day as His obedient child, you will without a doubt experience great joy no matter what's going on around you! You don't have to maintain a hyper-focus on the ugly deteriorating circumstances around you. You can look away to Him and praise the Lord ...no matter what you feel like!

The early church was filled with joy—*“the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit”* (Act. 13:52). The Bible commands us to, *“Rejoice always”* (1 Thess. 5:16)! We can laugh because the promise of [Romans 8:28 and 29](#) is still in effect. And surely, you remember what the result was when God's people in the Old Testament got right with Him. They sort of felt *E-L-A-T-I-O-N* ...a healthy thrill inside. And they *weren't* laughing just to be laughing either, but check out what they said, *“Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing: then said they among the heathen, The Lord hath done great things for them. The Lord hath done great things for us; whereof we are glad”* (Ps. 126:2-3).

Did you know that good clean humor and laughter are gifts from God? God indeed wants your home to be such a happy healthy place of peace, safety, love and others-orientated-purpose ...so that your unbelieving neighbors will have to hit the pause button and look again ...at you to see what all the laughter is about. Let that infectious-faith and splendid glory just beam out of you! When they see the irrepressible joy that's in your home, that's in your yard with your smiley-faced giggly kids... that's in your diligent work ethic.. they'll think ..or say, *Man, “the Lord has done great things for him!”*

Is your mouth filled with laughter and talk of a *seven-day-a-week-practical-Christianity* ..you know, talking about how cool and selfless Jesus really is? Why not? Nothing beats knowing Him! Can you think of anything or anyone better to talk about?

Christian, why be miss-focused when your eyes could be bolted on to Him, constantly gazing in His direction? We have something in the Lord that people don't understand,

but can never be beat! But if you and I are not genuinely excited inside or joy-filled, why should we expect anyone to become desirous of what we have? Christian, tell me, if you were an unbeliever and you came across a saint who acted just like you do, would you want that believer to talk with you or to pray with you so that you could get to know the Lord?

Maybe you've heard this question before, but allow me to ask it again: What if everyone in the church was as joyful as you are, would people in the workplace want to become your friend and have you over?

Would there be any laughter in God's house or in the people's homes if they followed your example? What if everyone in the church sang praises in worship just like you to, would new people feel like joining in when they got a seat near yours? Would they aggressively sing periodically through out the midweek?

What if they all behaved off-campus just like you do? Would the unbelievers on the streets or at the stores feel comfortable chatting with you to the point that they'd want to find out what you were into? What if they worked on the job the same way you work?

What if everyone in the whole church studied truth just like you pour over it, how well would the church know the Bible? What kind of a prayer-life would the church have if they followed your example? Would they ever pray for missionaries abroad or political leaders here at home, or for lost people on their blocks?

What would church attendance look like if everyone in the church laid-out, was tardy or gathered together in the same manner that you do? Would it be a pretty empty place most of the time? How many new people would be brought in to hear the Gospel? What kind of church would it be, if they did as you do? Would they be attending churches where people actually heard the law and the Gospel preached with unction ...a place where sinners regularly received some sort of opportunity to come to Christ through repentance and faith ...or would they merely hear man's opinions along with some positive self-help and political philosophies?

Well the church is made up of people just like us. And we can make a radical difference, if we allow nothing to steal our laughter, focus, and purpose.

Man, have verve in your walk.. flair, farbe and full-peddle-to-the-medal-creativity in this bland boring drab old world! Live out-loud ..step out and take that venture of faith that God has laid before you. Doubt your doubts, but never God's love for your and your friends. Live in union with the Spirit ..in fellowship with the Son.. in trust upon the Father. Live on purpose, not as a wandering generality ..with life, with vision, with candor and passion ...with vivacity, exuberance.. with vertical expectation (not in presumption). Live with growing believers and with ENTHUSIASM from Christ! Ask Him for it. Have salt in yourself, have grace and kindness on your lips. Sparkle and shine with His zeal and holy light, but not in some cheap-cheesy-Vegas sorta way. Ditch your smallness and Go B-I-G .. if you go at all.. together with Him who is BIG ..I mean, if He leads you to do something.

It's true, if it's worth doing, its worth doing right—its worth doing scripturally in a non-self righteous, smug manner. And doing it right doesn't mean it has to cost a fortune as so many Christian TV networks try to proclaim.

I appreciate my Lord who does all things right. I love my son, Chip (that's his nickname), who is learning to as well. He's somewhat of a comedian. He most of the time loves to do things in the best way and loves to laugh a lot ...and find stuff to laugh at. That helps us out at home.

People who are righteous and secure in their awareness of God's ubiquitous and pervasive care... I mean in His acceptance and warm welcoming-omnipresence ...who have experienced firsthand His love and forgiveness—they're the ones who are free to laugh. The stogy and religiously verklempt say Don't! Be reserved, be very quiet, go much slower, don't run, dance, sing or act up. But there's a place to act up, there's a time for going for it and pushing the envelope ...to attempt to extend the current limits of fruitful effectiveness and acceptability in the church or business world ..you know, without harming anyone or going beyond what's written (in the Bible). Have you ever been judged as guilty ..by association? Jesus was, but hey, sometimes it's OK to make em wonder why you're spending time with *"those kind of people"* ...or about what they think you've gotten away with. Who could smile like that so often? Please tell it—share the Gospel with Joy!

Wanna kick off your shoes, let down your hair, chuckle, smile and snicker more ..and know its right? Choose to ignore the libral media, the circumstances and your fickle feelings so you can rejoice the way you should! Refuse to let those who feign the love of Jesus get in your way, get you down, or deter you from sharing your faith exuberantly. Decide to [live real ..full-bore for Christ](#) starting today!

(1) Come on, lighten up a bit. Let me explain... life rarely gets so horrific that we can't find something to laugh at. In Jesus our future is as bright as the promises of God. Here I'm certainly not talking about sensually dancing around in the flesh like in some night club like a bar fly with wrong motives just to get others lusting. That's wrong. I'm not talking about making an inappropriate spectacle singin' (blaring out) with raunchy secular lyrics to draw attention to self or to something worse ..that literally turns the Lord's stomach. Hey, I know I'm not all that and a bag of chips who should be on American Idol. I have zero talent in that area, but I do sing and so should you ..to Him. I'm not even some comedians that can make you laugh by dancing a wild jig, but I have been known to dance with a straight face to the pain of my friends. Have you ever tried dancing for joy in worship unto the Lord?

Maybe it hurts you too much to laugh, dance or sing? I've been there. Do you have Bible questions in relation to this topic? [Click here](#) to ask us about what's important to you, or simply let us know how we can pray for you!

© Copyright 2007 by Fish4Souls. All rights reserved.