

## Do Christianity and Humor Mix?

Anyone who has spent much time around me knows that I enjoy humor. There is much comedic joy to be found in life and I do enjoy finding and taking note of it, whether it be silently or aloud. However, Christians are often portrayed as a bunch of old sad sacks who believe that anything more than a smile is cause for reprimand; and to tell jokes and be entertained by such things is slanderous behavior. Such observations are, by no means, true.

The disconnect often comes with the lack of understanding of what "humor" really is. "Humor" is defined as, "the quality or content of something such as a story, performance, or joke that elicits amusement and laughter; the ability to see that something is funny, or the enjoyment of things that are funny." Thus, humor is simply the finding of amusement in something and gaining enjoyment from it. There is nothing inherently wrong with humor. For many people it is, and should be, a part of everyday life.

Nevertheless, there should be a difference between the humor that Christians find and the humor that the world accepts. In our world today, humor is generally presented as being found in sex, vulgarity, and irreverent behavior. Most "humor" today is fraught with blaspheming God, taking his name in vain, making light of sin and wickedness, and belittling others so that the hearers feel better about themselves. Such is not the standard of humor that Christians should accept or promote.

Paul wrote in Colossians 4:6: "Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person" (ESV). Did you notice that Paul did not say to let your speech be gracious when around Christians, or that it should be seasoned with salt when in times of serious conversation? Do you know why that statement was made? Paul is writing in context of opening doors for teaching the Gospel. He precedes that verse with the statement, "Walk in wisdom toward outsiders, making the best use of the time" (Colossians 4:5). How could a Christian teach someone about Christ and serving him on the heels of a profanity-laced joke? Or a story of promiscuous exploits that violates multiple aspects of Scripture? Or the depiction of God doing or saying things that should never be attributed to his high and holy name?

Paul admonished that we should think on, "whatever things are pure" (Philippians 4:8). The word "pure" means "clean, without fault, chaste, modest." None of those descriptions fit the overwhelming majority of what passes for humor in today's society.

I am not against laughter, fun, or light-heartedness. What I am against is sin being purported as "harmless entertainment," and the name and principles of God being dragged through the mud as though they were just as meaningless as the rest of the things about which people laugh.

Our pleasure should never come with the demeaning of God or the despising of our morals and virtues. There is plenty about which to find joy and humor in life without cursing God, hurting other people, and promoting sinful actions. Let our hearts be filled with the joy, happiness, and pleasure that life can bring, but let it never be with disregard for God and our place in his service. ~ ~ *Adam Cozort*