

Laugh More

Proverbs 17:22

“A merry heart doeth good like a medicine”

There is nothing like a sense of humour for getting through the tough times. Doctors say laughter is like "internal jogging" It is good for you. It actually widens your arteries, de-stresses your heart and strengthens your immune system, enabling it to fight off disease.

A little humour will bring you more favour and co-operation. When you keep adding to the heat and confusion of a crisis, people lose respect for your ability to handle things under pressure. Bosses, if you stay cool and maintain your sense of humour when things are falling apart, your people will show their appreciation in better work and increased loyalty.

Most of us are far too serious. We're uptight about everything – about being 5 minutes late – getting stuck in traffic – somebody giving us a wrong look – waiting in line – somebody cuts us off in the freeway – discovering a wrinkle – gaining a pound – overcooking a meal - making an honest mistake. You name it – we lose perspective over it!

They say on average a child laughs 200 times a day; the adult laughs 6 times. Say something, doesn't it?

Three characteristics of laughter:

Laughter can be an Attitude

Laughter as an attitude can be for better or for worse.

Dictionary definition for “laugh” – make sounds instinctively expressing amusement

Dictionary definition for “scorn” – as in this is laughable, absurd, and ridiculous

When God told Abraham that Sarah will have a son, he *“fell facedown and laughed”* (Genesis 17:17) He found it funny, amused at the thought that Sarah at 90 would be able to bear a child. It was pure humour – he had a good laugh and in good nature.

But when Sarah overheard God saying to her husband that *'this time next year she will have a son'*, she laughed too. But, she found it absurd and unbelieving. So who can blame her, at age 90 to be a little scornful about the idea of childbirth? And God asked Abraham, *"Why did Sarah laugh?"* So God became serious about that kind of laughter. Sarah became afraid and denied laughing. She said *"I did not"* and God said, *"Yes, you did."* Genesis 18:12-15.

Without an offspring for years, having all the years of pain and heartache, upon hearing the impossible she laughed, amused, somewhat scornful. God was a little uncomfortable with her little amusement. So He asked, *"Why? You think this is too hard for me?"* So laughter can be an expression of joy or unbelief.

Laughter can be used for scorn and ridicule. Over and over again, in the Old Testament when Kings laughed, scorned, ridiculed and mocked - God reacted. This is a laughter that God is unhappy with. We need to watch our attitude here. Our laughter should not be of unbelief, scornful or of ridicule.

2 Kings 2:23-25 - Elisha was laughed and jeered at by a group of young people. They scorned at him calling him a "baldhead". The end result was judgment. Two bears came out of no where and mauled 42 of them! Keep that scornful spirit away!

Did you know that God like to laugh too? He is the one who has the right to laugh in scorn and ridicule. Psalms 2:4 - *"the one enthroned in heaven laughs and scoffs at his enemies."* Psalms 37:13- *"but the Lord laughs at the wicked for he knows their day is coming."*

Watch your attitude when you laugh.

Laughter often accompanies a Promise or a Blessing

Psalms 126:2 - *"Our mouths were filled with laughter, our tongues with songs of joy."*

When God turned the captivity of Zion there was laughter; there was great joy. Every time God turns a situation in our lives or gives us a breakthrough, we experience great relief - a sense of joy - and laughter is a natural outcome. When we receive blessings from him, there is rejoicing - a time of

making merry. Often even a promise from God brings a great sense of relief and joy.

Psalms 30:11 – “You turned my mourning into dancing; you removed my sackcloth and clothed me with joy, that my heart may sing to you and not be silent. O Lord my God I will give you thanks forever.”

With Sarah, the story did not end there. When it came down to the final analysis – Sarah understood laughter in a positive sense after her child was born. *Genesis 21:6 – “God has brought me laughter, and everyone who hears about this will laugh with me”*

Clearly her subsequent laughter was linked to joy – linked to receiving something from God. This might be very relevant to the laughing phenomenal we personally experienced or seen.

Laughter is an Arming Tool

Job 8:21 – “He will yet fill your mouth with laughter and your lips with shouts of joy.” *Nehemiah 8:10 – “the joy of the Lord is our strength.”*

This is the joy that comes from knowing that God is the Lord of every situation. Ever notice how some people go through incredible difficulties yet still have joy, still have the capacity for humour, while others who don't go through half as much, struggle to keep their heads above water? What's the difference? These people understand that joy – and laughter, that little amusement – is strength from God.

Proverbs 15:13 – “A cheerful heart brings a smile to your face; a sad heart makes it hard to get through the day.”

Sure, some problems are serious but we gain nothing by exaggerating their importance or dwelling on the bleak side of things. You and I can find something to smile, and laugh about in almost any situation – when we know who's on our side!

So arm yourself with a sense of humour, with laughter and with great joy. Do not be too serious – take life with a little pinch of salt. Joy, smile, laughter - it is our tool for a victorious life. It will add health and some good

years to our lives. This ability to laugh – especially at yourself – will stand in good state for you and your family.

Philip Yancey in his book, *Finding God in Unexpected Places*, says that laughter has much in common with prayer. In both acts, we stand on equal ground freely acknowledging ourselves as fallen creatures. We take ourselves less seriously. We think of our creatureliness. Work divides and ranks; but laughter and prayer unites.

Conclusion

Laughter can be an attitude - cultivate laughter as an expression of joy.
Laughter often accompanies a promise or blessing – learn to laugh at situation know that God is ultimately in control. Your laughter will help you cultivate an attitude of faith as well.

Arm yourself with laughter – let it be an arming tool for you, to equip you for a life of joy and rejoicing – because in it you will have strength.

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