

**WHAT MAKES ME LAUGH?**

*Reader's Digest* often runs a section in their magazine entitled, "Laughter, the Best Medicine." Truly one of the great assets we have is the ability to laugh with one another, at one another, and at ourselves. Humor is a very good thing when used properly.

We enjoy a clever story, a witty line, or stylist pun because they brighten our day with laughter. Many of us continue to read the newspaper comic strips after our grade school years are over. Some make a living telling jokes or being a circus clown because people enjoy that form of entertainment.

Humor is a trait we have, given us from God. Since we are created in God's image, we can see that God also has a sense of humor. Those of us who are not amused by a funny story may be having other problems which cloud one's ability to laugh. A person who is healthy both physically and mentally will enjoy the humor about him, create some of his own, and look to humor as one way of coping with life.

But unfortunately, not all humor is good. Some humor is at the expense of other people. To put certain ones down by the use of jokes not always in good taste. To glorify sin and the partakers thereof in a jokingly way is to commit sin ourselves (Eph. 5:4). We to analyze and answer the question, "What makes us laugh?"

In attempting to answer this question we should first realize that it is healthy to be able to laugh at oneself. A healthy self-image knows that we are not perfect, we will make mistakes, and as we attempt to do things better, if we can laugh at ourselves it will lessen the pain imperfection. We also realize it is good to laugh with others. We share common ground with people in our pilgrimage here, and when they can laugh at themselves, we know we can laugh with them because we have had similar experiences. Some of the funniest comedians are able to take the everyday occurrences of life and make them appear funny to us.

But there are things which make us laugh and shouldn't. If we speak of an individual and make fun of a physical or mental abnormality over which they have no control, this isn't funny, it's cruel and demeaning. If we laugh because of the sinful attributes of others we are encouraging this type of behavior, and become, in effect, partakers their sin (Rom. 1:32). Sexual overtones of activities condemned by the New Testament are often the subject matter of many jokes, stories, and one-liners. Sin is no laughing matter, and to make it such is to sin ourselves.

It's one thing to laugh at our inability to understand the things about us, and quite another to laugh at the mentally disabled in the same vein. It's one thing to laugh at our own shortcomings, and quite another to rejoice over another's sinful activities. And it, is always wrong to take good things that God has given us (such as sex for married couples only) and make light of those who use it wrongfully.

I believe in humor as a vital part of one 's life to ensure a healthy and balanced social and mental outlook. It also helps the PSA (Positive Spiritual Attitude). I use humor in my sermons, articles, and everyday conversations with people, but it is my intent to use humor in a way to build up, encourage, illustrate, and enlighten. May we (myself included) never use or enjoy humor that degrades, dehumanizes, or encourages sin in other people. Now ask yourself, "What makes me laugh?"