

food for thought >>>

In the New Testament, love is more of a verb than a noun. It has more to do with acting than with feeling.
~ R.C. Sproul



Proverbs 27:17 As Iron Sharpens Iron, So One Person Sharpens Another

The Growth Journal



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5 Ways to Have a Great 2022!

- **Read Your Bible 20 Minutes a Day, Every Day:** This may not sound like a very glamorous or interesting Christian New Year's Resolution at first, but let me tell you — it really does make a difference! When I started doing this I found new insights each year that I did not see before.
- **Set Aside 10 Minutes Each Day for Prayer:** Carving out 10 minutes a day does not have to be difficult. You can wake up 10 minutes earlier, pray in the shower, pray while on lunch break, pray while on your way to work, or take 10 minutes from your TV time.
- **Join a Bible Study or Christian Small Group:** This is another way to gain biblical insights, share your thoughts with others and have some accountability.
- **Ask One Friend To Church Each Month:** How does that help me??? It strengthens your confidence to be like Christ and lead others to salvation.
- **Start Tithing:** That's if you don't tithe now. The Scriptures are very clear — Christians are called to be generous. If you haven't gotten in the tithing habit yet, now is a great time to start! Even if you can't give a lot, start with *something*. You can always work your way

Faith
It makes things
possible, not easy

Christian Doctrine

by Alywin Mitchell



Right and proper credit must be given to Ken Malmin, Dean, Portland Bible College for his brilliant teaching and contribution to the course material, 'The Foundations of Christian Doctrine' by Kevin J. Conner, which I will use as my foundation for this series of articles on Christian doctrine, and to Pastor David Freck, the Lead Pastor and the other pastors at Church of the Harvest for their Holy Spirit lead instruction and training on the subject of Christian doctrine.

Christians must be taught sound Biblical doctrine because wrong doctrine leads to wrong thinking and wrong thinking leads to wrong living.

All doctrine must be confirmed by the infallible and unerring Word of God. Scripture contains all the words of God we need for salvation, for trusting Him perfectly, and for obeying Him perfectly. *"All scripture is breathed out by God and is profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work:"* 2 Timothy 3:16-17

The word "**doctrine**" simply means teaching. Bible doctrine refers to the teaching of the Scriptures. In my articles, I will use the term to refer to the truths of God's word that are to be taught. Doctrine must be sound, doctrine must be pure, doctrine must be scriptural, and doctrine must be obeyed.

Unfortunately, there are a lot of people that think that doctrine is not necessary and is useless and obsolete. Sometimes doctrine is downplayed for the sake of us all, "just getting along." Here are just two objections to the teaching of sound doctrine.

Objection # 1. We don't need doctrine; it just causes arguments and division.

Answer: Well, the answer to the objection is, we didn't originate doctrine God did! Anybody who rejects the doctrines of God is the one causing the arguments and division. You either believe it or you don't, it's that simple.

Objection # 2. It doesn't matter what you believe, as long as you believe in Jesus!

Answer: The answer to this objection is, how can you accept Jesus and separate Jesus from what He teaches. Jesus said, *"My doctrine is not Mine, but His who sent Me. If anyone wills to do His will, he shall know concerning the doctrine, whether it is from God or whether I speak on My own authority.* John 7: 16-17

In the world today we need absolutes. Our Lord God has absolutes! People need to know, WHO they believe, WHAT they believe, and WHY they believe it. These three things determine our character, our behavior, and our destiny.

Christian Doctrine Cont.

All doctrine comes from two main sources: the spirit of truth or the spirit of lies. What and why man teaches almost always comes from the spirit he receives or is manipulated by.

The doctrine of God is truth and brings life and liberty, but the doctrine of satan is lies and brings about death and bondage.

False doctrine perverts and contaminates the authentic fundamental teaching of God's word and can annihilate, and overwhelm those not ingrained in the Word of God. False doctrine always promotes a spirit of fear, attacks the Deity of Jesus Christ, proposes an instant cure-all, and can distract you from your personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

All doctrine proceeds from either God, satan, or man. These thoughts are best illustrated in Matthew 16:13-23.

The thoughts of God concerning Christ are seen in verses 16-18

Jesus answered and said to him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven. ¹⁸ And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it."

The thoughts of Man are seen in verses 13-14

¹³ When Jesus came into the region of Caesarea Philippi, He asked His disciples, saying, "Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?" ¹⁴ So they said, "Some say John the Baptist, some Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets."

The thoughts of satan are seen in verses 21-23

²¹ From that time Jesus began to show to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day. ²² Then Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, "Far be it from You, Lord; this shall not happen to You!" ²³ But He turned and said to Peter, "Get behind Me, Satan! You are an offense to Me, for you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men."

The end times are upon us, and satan is using everything at his disposal to deceive mankind. This includes the doctrine of the devils. *"Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, ² speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron."* 1 Timothy 4:1-2

Because the end times are upon us, our doctrine must be sound. Sound doctrine keeps us from doing wrong and it helps develop sound character. Sound doctrine affects our eternal destiny. We must not only believe in our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ but we must believe what He said and taught.

To quote Keven Conner, "All doctrine must arise out of and be founded firmly upon the only absolute authority in man's possession, the inspired and infallible Word of God."

Be The Difference

by Pastor Otis,
Life Changers Christian Center



No matter where we find ourselves in life, God desires for us to be difference makers. He wants us to be light in the midst of darkness. He desires us to be what's right when the wrong influence is obvious.

From a broad perspective, our first order of business is to please God. The bible tells in all things God is to be glorified. It also tells us whether we live or die we are to honor the Lord.

When pleasing God is a priority, everything else falls into place, because I operate under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. When I'm led by the Spirit of God, I put into practice those things that make me a better person. At some point, we all should desire to be better people; to be the type of person that's highly appreciated and not just tolerated.

"Well Pastor Otis...how can I be the person God wants me to be under the circumstance? I'm confined...My resources are limited...I belong to a system."

You are absolutely right! But your spirit is free and the goodness that flows from your heart is unlimited. And when your heart is in the right place, you're not only at peace WITH God...you also have the peace of God. The same type of peace that guards your heart and mind in Christ Jesus. [Philippians 4:7]

Listen...life is 90% of what happens to you and 10% of how you respond. How you respond to life and the circumstances thereof, says a lot about the condition of your heart...it's a heart issue. And if I'm going to be the difference maker, if I'm going to be the person God desires me to be, I have to protect my heart. Proverbs 4:23 says, "Guard your heart above all else, for it determines the course of your life."

Here are 5 practical habits that help make you a better person:

1. Do the right thing when no one is looking
2. Say the right things when no one is listening
3. Think the right things even when your intellect and opinions are not called upon
4. See the right things when your vision is distorted
5. Hear the right things when life is loud and God is silent.

Ephesians 6:10 tells us to "be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might."

You can do it! Someone is counting on you. **BE THE DIFFERENCE!**

God Bless...Your Brother,

Pastor Otis

Prison Jesus

by Curtis Wooten



Curtis was released from the Kansas Department of Corrections in 2018. Since then he has been building a new life led by God, which he enjoys with his new wife. Curtis has kept in close contact with Growth Ministries since release and has made a number of contributions of service to our organization. Curtis is a prime example of how easy it is to turn your life around.

Who or what is prison Jesus?

I know that it's hard for some people's family and friends to believe that God has made an impact on your life, while one is incarcerated. I know that many may even find it unbelievable! Then judgement comes upon the incarcerated for accepting Jesus as their Lord and Savior. Like they don't do alter calls at every Church service to invite people to start or renew their relationship with God. If it's good for those in the free world, why is it taboo for those that are locked up? Families thinking that they are being conned by receiving scriptures from you in their letters, labeling it as prison game, referring to your newfound faith with words of blasphemy.

Not only will you run into contact with those that you may consider close to you, that lack the faith that your love for God is real. Society will not accept you with open arms either. They like to play with the numbers of return offenders. Shut doors and opportunities right in your face, which is difficult to handle when you know in your heart that you have been disciplined and diligent with the best of intentions.

We may think that once we serve our time and complete our parole that we are free as we feel. The system still wants you to hire a lawyer to get your criminal history expunged, which could cost thousands of dollars and take months or years trying to get a verdict. Employers might request letters of recommendation. Even nonprofit organizations can refuse your service because of your background, when you would think that they would need the help. A personal experience with being denied assisting at risk kids was very discouraging to me, knowing that they could benefit from my testimony. Another discouraging moment was being denied employment. Only the reassurance of The Lord's grace and mercy will allow you to persevere through trials.

Matthew 7:13-14 (The Narrow Gate)

We have to be mindful of our position and our abilities. As the body of the Church, we have a responsibility of generosity. Giving is a gift from God. Not everyone is in a position to give. Giving isn't only limited to money, we can give the gift of our time, words of kindness, our talents, and our physical capabilities (helping push those that are in wheelchairs.) When we give, we are not only helping others, we are helping ourselves as well. Building up momentum in our giving abilities is like exercising, it gets greater with time.

Whenever the storms of doubt or discouragement come raining and thundering in your life, don't be afraid, for the Lord gives you a spirit of confidence.

Curtis W.

A Heart Wrenching Story About A Man's Journey Out of Prison



"In the world I lived in, that was life. You knew that you were sooner or later going to get caught and you were going to do some time and you were going to come home. One of the things I always said was, I could get out of jail." I didn't know how to stay out."

The Christian Broadcasting Network did an article on a man who at one time wanted nothing to do with God.

For most of his early life, Eddie Howard spent as much time in jail as he did on the streets.

Eddie grew up in the small town of Crozet, Virginia. He was, for the most part, a good kid and went to church with his family. But when his parents divorced and he moved in with his dad, the trouble started. "Fighting, skipping school and coming in anytime I felt like it." He was bitter about the divorce and blamed his dad for splitting up their family. "I always thought he was putting other people before me. I think that came from when I was young and he left us. I always saw him as the guy that something else was more important than I was. I resented that and I was angry about that." So, he avoided his dad and stayed in the streets.

As a teen, he liked working on cars, and also started getting high. "I had the car. And along with the car I had the girls. And so along with the girls, I had plenty of friends. So it made me feel good. It made me feel important. From smoking reefer, to the snorting cocaine, to shooting cocaine, to smoking crack, dropping pills, the whole drugs scene. I just dove right into it."

He rejected anything that had to do with God. "You all can have God because I'm not sure who He is or even if He exists. And frankly, I don't care whether or not He exists, because this life right here I'm living now is real to me." I thought I was "the" man.

In time, Eddie became a habitual criminal. "Petty larceny, I had an attempted murder charge, I had felonious assault charges, possession and intent to distribute and assault and battery." Over the years he spent many short stints in prison. He always managed to get back on the streets. But one time, there would be no way out. "I'm setting up a drug deal only to find out that this is an undercover police officer or a confident informant."

A Heart Wrenching Story About A Man's Journey Out of Prison

Eddie got busted and was charged with conspiring to sell cocaine. As a repeat offender, he faced life in prison. "I pride myself in knowing how to get out of jail, knowing how to get out of time, but I had no answers for this one. Man, I was broken. I cried every night."

Out of options, Eddie looked to the One he had been avoiding for most of his life. "One night I just cried out and said, "God, I went to church when I was a kid. I heard about you. I did the plays, I read about you. People told me about you. I said, "are you real? Get me out of this, and I'll serve you for the rest of my life." I was saying to God, "You got my attention." And I'll just use street terms – "you can be my man."

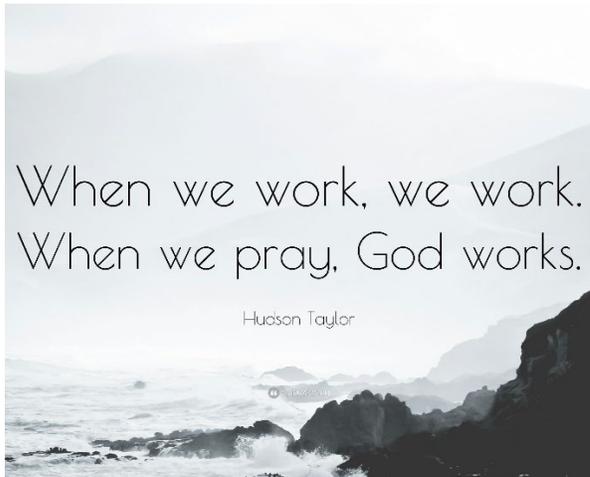
Eddie started reading the Bible and began studying with Christian inmates. A prison chaplain also took Eddie under his wing. "We read the scripture together. And the Bible says, "If any man be in Christ Jesus, he's a new creature or creation. Old things have passed away and behold, all things have become new." I said, "Impossible! There's no way you can wipe my slate clean." Then before his case went to trial, evidence went missing and Eddie was sentenced to only three years. While incarcerated, he and another prisoner made a decision that changed their lives. "We were reading in Romans where it says, if you confess with your mouth and you believe in your heart, that Christ died for us and that God raised him from the dead (that you can be saved). And we confessed it right there like, "Lord, we want you to come in."

When he was released this time, Eddie knew he could not return to his old ways – God had totally transformed his life. "I realized that God sees me through his Son. That's how I became that new creature. When Jesus came in, He washed all that stuff away. Nobody can hold that against me, and that new person began to evolve in my heart."

He also married and turned his favorite hobby into a career. Eddie knows what true freedom is, and has experienced the love of a father that will never change. "His faithfulness to show me that even in my shortcomings, even in mistakes that I made, He's still God. That's his faithfulness to say – "Eddie, I still love you, and I'm still going to show you the way, but I want you to learn from these mistakes as I show you the way."

~Poetry & Inspiration Corner~

“You were made by God and for God, and until you understand that, life will never make sense.” — Rick Warren



You Can Count On It

Poet: Alexa A. M. Hebert

God's got a plan
So don't be sad
And, don't be bad
Just be glad.

When you are blue
Know that God is true
Trust Him each day
It will all be okay.

Don't worry or be sappy
Live your life and be happy.
He loves you, no matter what
You can count on that!

God Knows

This is the season for holiday cheer,
To have loved ones and friends so near.
But, think of those who don't have that fate,
They experience loneliness and sometimes hate.
They wonder how it feels to be surrounded by those we love,
They wonder if God hears their prayers in the heavenly skies above.
They see the lovely Christmas trees and pageant string of lights,
They wonder if they are thought about since they are out of sight.
God sees them in their loneliness and acts without delay,
He sends his Holy Spirit to brighten up their day.
He wraps His arms around all of us who suffer in this season,
To implore us to trust in Him without fully knowing the reason.
So, if you look around this season and your heart is feeling low,
Pick up your Bible and read His word, and your spirit will start to glow.

Sherelle Simmons



We'll Get Through This

Lord, our troubles
Are so great,
We don't know what to do;
The price for our
Iniquity
Is finally coming due.

The world is crumbling
All about;
No safe place can be found.
Right is wrong,
Wrong is right;
The change is quite
profound.

Lord, we need
Your guiding light
To lead us out of here;
We'll focus on
Your Word, and prayer,
To take away our fear.

Temptations of
This dying world
We'll rule out and let go;
Give our burdens
All to you,
Shed all worldly woe.

That's how we'll
Get through this, Lord,
Fixed on heaven above,
Assured of your
protection, help,
And everlasting love.

By Joanna Fuchs

My Story

by Germaine Chappelle



Hello my name is Germaine Chappell. I am currently 45 years old and a resident of Kansas City, Mo. I am from Alabaster, AL and I'm a survivor of the streets/prison.

I grew up playing football and basketball. Around 11th grade I was expelled from high school and the streets were awaiting. The guys that seemed to have it all were Dope Boys, so I gravitated to what seemed to be the way to go. I began to hang out in the Dope Spots with the guys we looked up to. Before long the money I was making at the restaurant I was working at was no money, especially for what I was wanting to buy. So at the age of 17, I brought my first fifty-dollar Rock, and jumped in the Game. The Game will eat you alive. Back then people would fight with bare hands very rarely using knives. About 1995 was when I jumped in the Game and about 1996 I was on my way to prison with two possession of controlled substance cases, high-speed chase case, assault on an Officer, etc. I was sentenced to 10 years with one year to do and 5 years probation. The sentence that I was given was to screw you because if I violated my probation, I would have to do 9 years straight up with no good time. Now this is what was not told to the youngsters wanting to jump in the Game.

When I was released in 1998, I had used the prison system and got my GED before being released. I got a job and my own apartment and was on the right track until I lost focus and started looking at some of my Homeboys cars and their stuff. Slowly I began to hang with that crowd again. I convinced myself that if I could sell weed and not cocaine I would be fine. But one day after sitting in my apartment, God showed me myself in a vision that I was back in prison with the guys I had just left. I yielded to that warning and called my sister, who was here in Kansas City, and asked her to move here and she stated to come on. Now I was raised in the church and in the Word of God by my Mama, so I had a reference of who God was. When I left, I left my apartment fully furnished and I told my Mama to give my stuff away.

I left with nothing but my clothes. When got to Tennessee, I found a gospel CD in my car. I put it in the radio and began to cry and wanted to turn around but I pressed through and kept driving. Now this was 2002 when I left Alabama and have not returned to live.

I arrived in Kansas City and began living a different life because my sister exposed me to people I wouldn't normally hang out with. Slowly I realized I was stuck in a box in my old life, now I was not selling drugs or hanging around Dope Boys but I was at the club every night. That life began to get boring because something was missing, but I couldn't figure out what was missing. I felt like I had landed a job that was paying more money than I was used to making. Then one day I looked around me at work and it dawned on me that this was a dead end job and I could do better. The thing was I had to get some kind of skill so it would outweigh the felony that was on my record once any employer did a background check. I was looking at a commercial one day and it was about skilled trades. I wrote down the information and made the call and set up an appointment. I enrolled and began to see things differently. I began to go to church and gave my life to Christ and things started to come together for what God had planned for my life. I graduated in 2004 with an Electrical Mechanical Associates Degree and got a job in the electrical field.

I reached back and moved a girl from back home to enjoy this journey with me since she had my daughter. I let the Devil set the stage and I got played. Shortly after moving her here, she convinced me to move to Tennessee, which would be closer to Alabama and she had family there. I was there about a year and a half. She cheated and I found myself in jail for breaking in my own house, so I got my own apartment there in Tennessee. Real quick I begin to drink a lot trying to suppress my problems. God showed me myself again and I moved back to Kansas City. I looked up a girl I was kicking it with before reaching back in my past with my Baby Mama. I found her and we are together with our daughter till this day. Now we are both living for Christ and raising our daughter to know God as well.

God gave me vision after sobering me all the way up in 2010, and it was to start my own electrical company. I moved on the vision and today my wife and I are in business together, operating that business which is Chappell Electric. The mission is to Exceed Above Expectations, to give back to those coming out of prison and teach them a trade while earning a good living for them and their family. We also are trying to stop kids from taking the same route I took, by giving kids coming out of high school that don't want to go to college a chance to get into the electrical trade by taking advantage of our pilot program. After being with our company for one year we will pay for their electrical training through ABC Training for Skill Trades. We are honored to be doing the work of the Lord which was given to me in a vision. Also, my wife's organization is paying for the electrical training by offering scholarships. We have not seen half of what God would have us to do.

My life is now with Purpose!!!!

Words to Grow By

A New Year's Prayer

May God make your year a happy one!
Not by shielding you from all sorrows and pain,
But by strengthening you to bear it, as it comes.

Not by making your path easy,
But by making you sturdy to travel any path.

Not by taking hardships from you,
But by taking fear from your heart.

Not by granting you unbroken sunshine,
But by keeping your face bright,
Even in the shadows.

Not by making your life always pleasant,
But by showing you
When people and their causes need you most,
And by making you anxious to be there to help.

God's Love, Peace, Hope and Joy to you
For the year ahead.

*Do not remember the former things,
Nor consider the things of old.
Behold, I will do a new thing,
Now it shall spring forth;
Shall you not know it?
I will even make a road in the wilderness
And rivers in the desert.
Isaiah 43:18-19 NKJV*

God's Promises...He is doing a new thing! Rejoice!



Women Empowering Women

It's a New Year!
Step out of the History that is holding you back
And step into the New Story you are willing to create.
Women don't need to find a voice...they have a voice
And they need to feel empowered to use it;
And people need to be encouraged to listen.

*For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand
that we should walk in them. Ephesians 2:10*

Felon Friendly Employers

- Paydayz Staffing Solutions, Inc.
- Dominoes Pizza
- Amazon
- Federal Express
- Budget Rent A Car
- Goodwill
- AAMCO Transmissions
- Khol's
- Bahama Breeze
- Buffalo Wild Wings
- Chilli's
- Dell Corporation
- Hilton Hotels
- iHop
- Kraft Foods
- Marriott Hotels
- Red Lobster
- U S Trucking
- Pet Smart

- McDonald's
- Pepsico
- Salvation Army
- Men's Warehouse
- Residence Inn
- Olive Garden
- Firestone Tires
- United Airlines
- Lowes
- Yard House
- Yellow Frieght (YRC)
- UPS
- Target
- Radisson
- Outback Steakhouse
- Mobile Oil
- IBM
- Greyhound

closing words...

Who Am I and Why Am I Here?

27 So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. And God blessed them. 28 And God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth." Genesis 1:27-28 ESV



Lonnie Johnson
GMI Executive Director

Who am I and what am I here for? These two questions have plagued mankind for all of history.



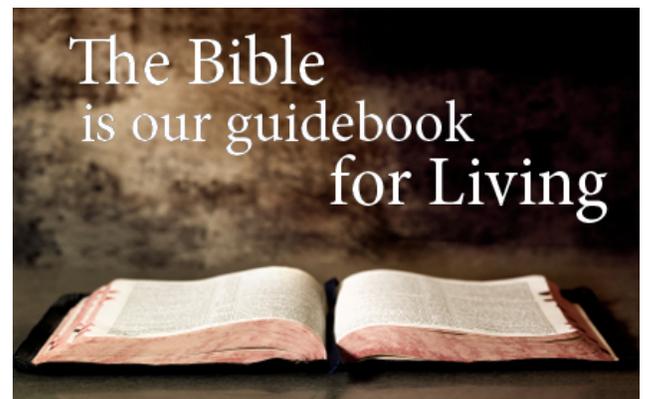
Who Am I?

Your name may be Darryl, Michael, Garnett, Nicholas, Cecillia, or Melissa. But who are you really? The world starts defining us as soon as we are born by giving us a name, a racial identification, or a social security number amongst other things. But our real identity should be found in Christ. We are Citizens of God's Kingdom (Phil 3:20). We are part of a Royal Priesthood and a Holy Nation (1 Pet 2:9). We are co-heirs with Christ to all that God has to offer (Rom 8:17). These are just a few identifiers that the Bible declares that you are. They hold more meaning, power and authority than any worldly definition.

I am here because:

And while we struggle to determine who we are we struggle to determine "why we are". Why am I here? Why do I exist? One of the reasons God created you was so he could have a reflection of Himself or an **image of Him** on earth. Thus, we are to have the characteristics of love, faithfulness, holiness and mercy to name a few. He created you so that you could walk in authority and dominion over the earth after he created everything (Gen 1:26-28).

When God created us he knew exactly what he was doing. He had a perfect plan for how we were to function and be. But as we grow and see the things of this world, we start altering the way God designed us. We operate against his will. We try to look like the World instead of God. The world has been shaped by Satan. He is the ruler of this kingdom. We were meant to be citizens of a greater kingdom. When we accept Christ we should return to the realization of who we are and do our best to be, act and look like Christ while fulfilling the purpose that he has for us.



I've only scratched the surface here. There is so much more to who you are and why you exist. The entire bible is about God's plan for mankind and our relationship with Him. Growth Ministries will be publishing a "Read the Bible in a Year" reading plan commentated by our very own Pastor Mike Hernandez. If you would like a copy of this reading plan, please write us. Start the year out right discovering who you are and why you are here.

He couldn't have done what he did, if he hadn't been who he was!

When my professor from Portland Bible collage made this statement, it brought a smile to my lips and joy to my heart. Since I first heard it, I've used it lots of times myself and it still makes me smile. Which brought about the question the other day. Did Jesus have a sense of humor? Did Jesus laugh?

I've heard it said quite often that, "if you don't think God has a sense of humor, just look at the person sitting next to you, or just look in the mirror!"

Did Jesus have a sense of humor, did he laugh? Of course, Jesus laughed. If I'm in a group of 12 men, especially a group as diverse as the disciples, sooner than later someone is going to say or do something that will make me and possibly all of us laugh.

We don't have all the information on Jesus' life in the New Testament. And we don't have obvious references to prove that He laughed. But John, perhaps Jesus' closest disciple, says that Jesus did many other things that were not written in his book. So, the lack of a specific reference proves nothing. However, it might have been the humor of His day and something with which we would struggle to find the joke. Some of those ancient cultural clues and euphemisms may be lost on us. We know that God laughs. Psalms 59: 8 says, "*but you laugh at them, LORD; you scoff at all those nations.*" And Ecclesiastes 3:4 says that "*there is a time to laugh.*" Psalm 126. It says "*when the Lord restored the fortunes of Zion...our mouths were filled with laughter and our tongues with shouts of joy.*" The very fact that we humans have a sense of humor indicates that God does too, because we are made in His image.

The word of God says that Jesus was fully God and fully human. If Jesus was truly human, he laughed. Humor is a fundamental part of having human emotions. I can't imagine Jesus going to a wedding and not laughing. Remember He changed the water to wine and made the wedding reception something extraordinary. We know that made His mother happy so it only goes that pleasing His mother had to make him smile. Jesus told many parables; you have to believe that some of those stories made people smile and laugh. C'mon, Man! Sometimes He got His point across by making people see the ridiculous side of life.

A great example is a time that Jesus describes how hard it is for a proud, self-confident rich person to enter the Kingdom of God. He said it would be like a camel trying to go through the eye of a needle. I can't imagine the people He is talking to not laughing as they got that picture in their minds. Yes, I know, His point was serious, but He used an overstated, humorous illustration to get His point across. He jokingly renamed James and John (who were brothers) the "sons of thunder". It was no doubt given as a humorous recognition of their sometimes impulsive and zealous behavior. Jesus was accused of being *too* joyful on occasion. As in Luke 7:43, The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and you say, 'Here is a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners.'

Did Jesus have a sense of humor? Did Jesus laugh? I believe Jesus had a sense of humor. Maybe the greatest one ever. Be grateful for your God-given sense of humor, but never use it to hurt, degrade or embarrass others. Good, clean humor celebrates the goodness of God.

Prayer for Hearing

After service, a stranger approached the pastor and said, "I'd like you to pray for my hearing."

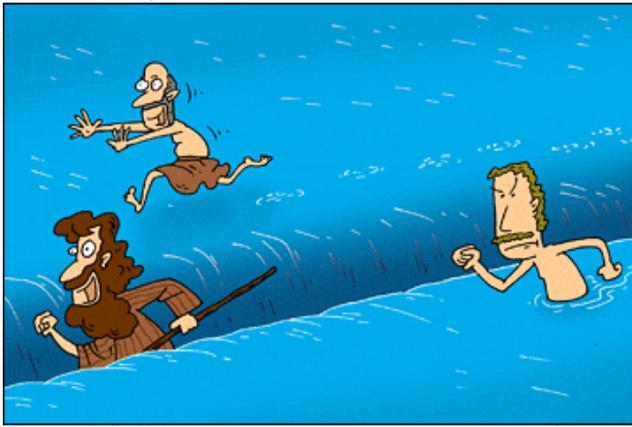
The pastor placed his hands on the man's ears and said a passionate, earnest prayer.

"How's your hearing now?" the pastor asked.

Looking surprised, the man said, "Well, it's not until tomorrow."

Just for Laughs

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Thanks to Colin Nelson 12-14-2009

HOZEKIAH FOUND THIS RACE WITH MOSES AND PETER TO BE GROSSLY UNFAIR

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Thanks to Steven Willis (See Genesis 6-8)

01-14-2011

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Thanks to Chad Hengeveld 12-31-2012

YOU NEEDN'T REALLY BOTHER WITH THOSE NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS ANYMORE

Why do birds fly south for New Year's Eve?
It's too far to walk.

Why should you put your new calendar in the freezer?
So you can start the year in a cool way.

What is corn's favorite holiday?
New Ear's Eve

What is a cow's favorite holiday?
Moo Year's Eve

I was going to quit all my bad habits for the new year, but then I remembered that nobody likes a quitter.

I would lose weight for my New Year's resolution, but I am not a loser.

What do you call someone named Stephen on December 31st?
New Year's Steve



Word Search

J S C C T B C V O S O R D V I D R Q A M
I T G O V Z V Z A G J S M A L I L W Y W
Q R K A N T I Q L Z N A T I B J S W W D
O E H R T F C L B U S F N N D W H K G C
E A Q Z B H E E W F H J Z U Y N I J J P
K M E F U N E T L T I L G O A L I E I L
P E X F E D P R T E Y R I T R R I G I F
R R H Q Q S S Q I I B H E L Y R Y I H U
F D C O N H T Q I N R R P C L X N S Q T
Y I E O U V I I A G G A A W R X S W P Q
G E F K U R J P V F U H P T R A R N R P
E K A P C N G S A I I E Y F I X C D X H
V I Q R W H T L B R T R M N Z O S K G M
E S T W C H A D A A T I E M I S N N E D
I S Z I X S U M O S L Y E W R H U M W R
V S M V B J W C P W S L E S O O N A S H
R G K D A W D G A A N G O I K R F S H Y
Y C K H B R O W L P G E I O B N K K A H
P N P X Y G Y X M W I N N E N S F S T F
G D A N C I N G L E G E E A A C M U U Y

Celebration

Festivities

Firecracker

Gathering

Countdown

Fireworks

Hourglass

Confetti

Champagne

Midnight

Streamer

Balloon

Dancing

January

Horns

Party

Year

Baby

Eve

Kiss

Mask

Word Search



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Eve

Kiss

Mask