

The Gift of Laughter
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It's the middle of summer. It's vacation time. So put your feet up and smile awhile. Let's give thanks to God for his gift of laughter; it's a wonderful blessing and a great tool of encouragement! Remember, "The joy of the Lord is your strength" (Nehemiah 8:10).

The Bible first mentions laughter in Genesis 17:17 and 18:12. Unfortunately, Abraham and Sarah used the gift of laughter in a negative way. They laughed at God and at his promise to give them a son! Abraham fell face down in laughter at this news; he was 99 years old at the time! His wife Sarah was 90! She also laughed when she heard the news, but when the Lord confronted her, she denied it.

Despite their snickering, Sarah bore Abraham's son nine months later. They named him "Isaac"; the name means "laughter." Sarah commented, "God has brought me laughter, and everyone who hears about this will laugh with me" (Genesis 21:6).

While we can abuse the gift of laughter, God can also use our joy and even our laughter as a witnessing tool, pointing people to His blessings and power. Psalm 126:2 speaks of the laughter and songs of joy that filled the air as God's people returned to their homeland after years in exile. And as the nations around them witnessed the joy of God's people, they proclaimed, "The LORD has done great things for them."

Laughter comes in all styles and shapes: from the true belly laugh, to mere chuckles, to giggles and cackles, to nervous laughter, to the polite, social laugh, to an occasional snort. And, I might add, even a silent smile or quiet groan at a good pun!

While you may not laugh right out loud at the following groaners, I hope that at least one or two of them will bring a smile to your face. And I hope you will share that joy with others. As humorist Josh Billings once said, "Laughter is the sensation of feeling good all over and showing it principally in one place."

Now for a few groaners:

Thieves who steal corn from a garden could be charged with stalking.

I wondered why the baseball was getting bigger. Then it hit me.

If you take a laptop computer for a run, you could jog your memory.

In a democracy, it's your vote that counts; in feudalism, it's your Count that votes.

With her marriage, she got a new name and a dress.

Show me a piano falling down a mineshaft and I'll show you A-flat miner.

A grenade fell onto a kitchen floor in France, resulting in Linoleum Blown Apart.

You are stuck with your debt if you can't budge it.

A hard-boiled egg is hard to beat.

Let's serve the Lord and his people by spreading joy, fun, and laughter every day!