

SARCASM ISN'T FUNNY

Do you admire funny people? Do you ever wish that you could be as witty as they are or say those funny things? Do you say, "I don't think I think quickly enough?" Today we are talking about a type of humor that is not funny. We are talking about being sarcastic. I am pretty much a live wire. I laugh a lot; I get tickled over stupid things. My brother, who is five years older, and I have a weird sense of humor between us. One of us can say something and we will be laughing so hard that tears are running down our face.

People around us do not see what is funny and they do not get it. There is another kind of humor that is considered witty, smart, and current; that is sarcastic humor. It is not a good kind of humor. In our world and on television, it gets high praise. On some of the late night shows when they are making fun of people and issues, it is considered very witty and urbane. It is prized by the world. We do not live by the world standards. We live in this world and we are supposed to be out in the world. We are not supposed to be hidden in the church. We are supposed to be out with the people, but we are not supposed to be like the people when they are doing things that are contrary to God's word. We are going to study sarcasm today. It is not only used with humor. It can be used in a biting, cutting way to make points, defend yourself or hurt someone. God is the one who tells us how to act. What does God say about sarcasm?

Do you appreciate the Bible? Do you read the Bible? If you will read Proverbs every day, you will get common sense, wisdom and good judgment, and you will know when to use things and when not to use them. It does not matter if the world thinks it is a great way to be. You do not do it because God says not to do it.

There is something in us that wants to be funny and wants to be seen as wise. When you put those two together, that is when sarcasm can come. Usually though it is a symptom of a deeper issue. Let's look at a scripture in Luke, "A good person produces good things from the treasury of a good heart, and an evil person produces evil things from the treasury of an evil heart. What you say flows from what is in your heart." Did you ever think about that? When you are saying those cutting and cruel remarks, you are revealing what is in your heart. In Ephesians, the Bible says, "Make a clean break with all cutting, backbiting, and profane talk. Be gentle with one another, sensitive. Forgive one another as quickly and thoroughly as God in Christ forgave you." How quick was that? Think about when you decided, "I am a sinner. It's plain and simple. I am messed up. If I died, I wouldn't have a chance of going to heaven. I would be in hell so quick it would be faster than I could imagine." Yes, you would if you do not believe in Jesus and He is not your Lord and Savior, if He does not live in your heart and rule your life. How quick did God forgive you? He did as quick as a wink. He forgave you the minute you sincerely said, "I am a sinner and I know it and I need a savior and You are my savior Jesus. Please forgive me and come into my life and change me." He did it immediately. That is how God wants you to be in forgiving one another.

Sometimes you use sarcasm because you have not forgiven someone and you are going to get back at them in a subtle way. You think you are getting away with it.

What causes people to use sarcasm? Pain, anger and past things that have happened that were unjust have produced anger. It is a defense mechanism. You think that if you use that humor people cannot get too close to you. Poor self-image is another cause or anger that you try to disguise. Someone might say, "You hurt me when you said that," and you respond, "I didn't mean anything by that, I was just being funny." You did mean something and you cloaked the anger in sarcasm. (Look at these pictures of a sarcastic young man and a sarcastic young woman.) Today it is very prevalent among young people to use sarcasm, especially with each other. Using a putdown is highly esteemed. "She can really put you in your place," and everyone laughs. The person on the receiving end of the sarcasm is hurting, even if they have a smile on their face. People think it is fun and they like to be seen as witty. It is very accepted in our society, but people do not realize what they are doing. They also do not know that sarcasm adds up over the years.

Where did the word "sarcasm" come from? It is a Greek word. They had long strips of leather made into whips. The long strips of leather had little, tiny, pointed, sharp rocks. They would hit someone with them and it looked like it did not do much damage. Eventually the person's body would have bloody spots all over it. (Look at this picture of a sarcastic man playing innocent. I am sure if this man could talk in this picture he would be saying, "I didn't do anything. What are you talking about?") What does it do to the people they whip sarcasm on? It inflicts pain and lowers their self-esteem. It will kill their dreams.

Sarcastic people will try to kill your faith. That is a real big one. I hate sarcasm. To me, it is like murder in the low degree, just trying to be cruel to people. My pastor, Jimmy Evans, says that one of the greatest enemies of marriage is sarcasm. He is a marriage expert and does marriage seminars all over America,

maybe all over the world. I know his books go all over the world. Let me read to you what he says. "To understand why it is so dangerous, let's begin by understanding the definition. *A cutting, often ironic remark intended to wound. A form of wit that is marked by the use of sarcastic language and is intended* (that is the key word) *to make its victim the butt of content or ridicule.*" People who use sarcasm have an intention. They want to make the person on the receiving end of it feel lower and less. I know a couple who were married a really long time and the man used sarcasm. He would always say, "Yeah, well. . . Oh yeah, I'll bet. . ." He used it so much on his wife that as the years went on that humor began to destroy her. She ended up always putting herself down because she thought, "He says it about me. He sees it in me. I guess I am." She began to finally believe that. It is slow death. It is murder in the low degree. God says, "Do not do it. I do not like it." Also, it is a very prevalent tool of the devil. He likes to use it. He likes to see you in pain. It is the devil's kind of humor. Does God have humor? Absolutely, He does. Where do you think humor came from? He is funny and witty. You can see it in the Bible. If you read close enough and read between the lines, you can see what they are saying. However, it is not demeaning humor. It is not designed to pull people down. It is not designed to pull you down. It is funny and it is clean.

(Look at this picture of a sarcastic married man leaving bleeding wounds. I see this happen in marriages, either in the very early days of marriage or when the marriage is in serious trouble, or if it is a marriage that has lasted a long, long time, I see it at the end of the marriage after many, many years. Why would it happen at the end? When you are married and you love each other, you still see each other's faults. As you go through the marriage, you try with kindness, compassion or whatever else to get the other person to correct stuff. Then one day, you kind of wake up and realize that there are some things that are not ever going to change. You have to look at yourself say, "I guess I am never going to change. I try but I don't seem to." Out of that, sarcasm can come as a weapon or a defense mechanism. Then people begin to destroy each other at the end of the marriage. God says, "I want your last days to be your best days. I want you to love the wife of your youth." How do you get there if you have been using sarcasm as one of your weapons and if it has been the devil using you to hurt people? You tell him, "In the name of Jesus Christ you are not going to use me anymore like this. I rebuke you. Sarcasm, get out of my life. Jesus I am so sorry. I thought I was really funny. I knew the look in their eyes. I knew I was not building them up. I just wanted to be so cute and so funny. I repent. I am sorry. It is wrong. Change my tongue, Jesus. Change me." There is a wonderful book about Lord change me. He will answer that prayer. You do not even have to pray "If it be Thy will." It is His will, you do not have to pray that.

In families, you will see people doing it with children. I think that is the one I hate the most. It does not matter how these precious children came into the world. God wanted them to live and He has a plan for their lives. I see adults use sarcasm on their children, even their teenagers. They use sarcasm on them and it cuts them down. It puts anger in them. Why do they do it? They do it to ridicule and punish, or to get back at. Sometimes, when you do not have the real answers for a situation, you will use sarcasm because you do not know what the real answers are. What do you do about that? All of us have to grow in the Lord. Get some books or counseling. Talk to someone who is really good in anger management. I am going to be teaching a lesson on anger management. Sarcasm is anger.

How do you stop it? You call out to God. First, you admit it. I call it naming the baby. You could be one of those Christians that says, "Oh Lord, forgive me of all my sins." That is not nearly as hard to do as to say, "Lord, I just hurt Susan with my cutting tongue for the tenth time. I am so sorry God. It is wounding her, it is wrong. It is the devil using me. I don't want him using my life. I want you using my life God. Get this sarcasm and irony out of me. Heal me Jesus. Where the words out of my mouth reveal my heart." That is the kind of prayer you can pray. So the first thing is to name the baby.

What is the second thing you can do? Repent to the people you have used it on. They may not even understand when you say it. They may be so busy firing them back at other people and everyone is sitting around thinking how clever they are. Stop the merry-go-round and say, "I would like to apologize to you." "What for?" You tell them, "I have had a real sarcastic mouth and God has convicted me of it. I don't want to do it anymore. Will you forgive me?" "Well I guess so." That is how they might take it but God is dealing with you. God is telling you and you know it, so just say it. What do you do if you do it again? You repent again. Peter asked, "How many times should I forgive my brother, Lord." The Lord said, "Seventy times seven." That means you just keep repenting and they just keep forgiving.

Another thing you can do is to start watching for it in your speech. Try to catch yourself before you do it. Think about the situations you are in when you do it. It could be when you are in a restaurant. Everyone is laughing a lot and everyone is being funny, and then someone starts being catty or sarcastic. Another time could be at the dinner table when the children are driving you crazy. Stop it. They are little children. They are not big people, they are little people. If you want to fight with someone, pick on someone your own size. God does not like it. I cannot tell you enough how much He does not like it.

As the offended person, what do you need to say? Look them in the eye and quietly say, "You know, when you do that it really does hurt me, but I forgive you. Just do not do it anymore." Children can forgive adults so fast, it is amazing. You can do some really bad things and then look them in the eye and say, "I was wrong. Mommy was wrong. I am sorry. Will you forgive me." They say, "Sure," and then they do. They do not hold it against you.

Be honest with yourself. Really try to identify what you are really feeling when you do it. What emotion is going on? Then deal with your inner anger in the right way. You can go to God and just be so blunt and honest and say, "Lord, I just did it again." That happened to me yesterday on the phone with someone. I was just telling them so I said, "Lord I just did this." The person started laughing and said to me, "Betty you are so honest." I said, "Well, I did it and I don't want to do it." Do not justify it. We all try to justify our sins. We try to justify why we did something and make it okay. Do not do that. Just deal with it. That is all God is asking you to do, just deal with it. Ask God, "Lord, how do I deal with my disappointments? How do I deal with my hurts? How do I deal with how I want to be important in front of people?" God might say to you, "You are important to Me. You have an audience of one, and I love you and I love to talk to you. I love to hear you talk. You are important to Me." That is a prophetic word. There is someone watching this show and you have just thought that thought, "Lord, I want to be important to people." The Lord says, "You are important to Me. I am really all that matters. I love you and honor you. I watch out for you. I want to heal your hurts, I want to heal your sadness and pain. I want to heal your disappointments. I want to take it away and replace it with my joy." That is a word for someone.

How do you know if a word given is a word for you? Your heart starts beating fast or you clue in. When I have given words like this on television, I have had people say, "Betty, I walked into the house and flipped the TV on and I thought 'She is talking to me.'" Yes, God had you walk into the house and flip on the television at that moment. There is probably someone watching right now that was flipping channels and just heard that and thought, "How could that happen?" God did it. I told you He loves you.

Talk to the person that you have been using sarcasm on in an honest manner. If this is a big deal in your life, then you need to deal with it in a big way. Just talk to them in an honest manner and tell them. What if they do not forgive you or what if they still bear some sort of grudge against you? Just leave the results to God. God says, "Let Me fight your battles for you." One reason you use sarcasm could be because someone has produced hurt in your life and that is your way of getting back at them in a safe way. So many times when we have been hurt, we want to hurt the person who has hurt us. We want to make them feel the way they make us feel. God says, "No, vengeance is mine. I will repay." Does He let them off the hook? Not really. When God goes to them and tries to correct them, He does it with the intention of healing them. We might be doing it with the intention of hurting them. Let God deal with it. We are really talking about you. You cannot change anyone else, you can only change yourself and we all know how hard that is. That is not an easy thing to do.

Do you have the fear of the Lord? Do you really care about what He cares about? Do you really hate what He hates? Then do not use sarcasm because He hates it. In James 3, talking about the tongue, "In the same way the tongue is a small part of the body but it brags a lot. Think about how a small spark can set a big forest on fire. The tongue also is a fire. The tongue is the most evil part of the body. It pollutes the whole person. It sets a person's whole way of life on fire and the tongue is set on fire by hell itself." That will make you change your ways, won't it. My daughter lives in California. When the fires were going on around San Diego, they came within two miles of her house. She had to have her bag packed, right by the door. If they came through the neighborhood saying she had to leave, she would be able to grab her children and leave quickly. She did not have to, but one of her friends did have to. Do you know what caused the fire? It was caused by a child playing with fire. That is the same thing I am talking about with sarcasm. You might say, "It is just such a little thing. They don't even think anything about it. We all do it to each other. It is not a big deal." What did I just read? "A small spark can set a big forest on fire." That is what we saw in those fires. They raged and raged. None of us likes to think our tongue could do that. I can tell you, an unsanctified tongue can do a lot of damage. In fact, it sets a person's whole way of life on fire. That is what the Bible says.

What are you going to do then? Ask God to give you a new kind of humor. Ask Him and see what it turns out to be. Then ask Him to give you a caring heart for other people. If you have a caring heart, you really care about how it makes people feel. What about the person who is using sarcasm on you? You can pray specifically about the sarcasm. You could do spiritual warfare for them. "Satan, in the name of Jesus, you are not going to use this tool in this person and I bind you in the name of Jesus Christ, get out of his life. Stop it now." Does the person have to know you are doing that? No, you can do it by yourself. If you do it enough, in time you really will see a change because God will answer your prayer. Get your humor from another source. Do not use television. Many famous people were famous for their biting wit. Mark Twain was. But, do not use sarcasm.

QUIET TIME QUESTIONS

1. Define sarcasm.
2. What are the causes of sarcasm?
3. What does the Bible say about sarcasm?
4. What is the impact of sarcasm?
5. How do you stop using sarcasm?
6. How do you stop sarcasm if you are the offended person?

To watch the video on SARCASM ISN'T FUNNY, Pillar Five, Relational Skills, go to www.bettyswann.com.

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