

HUMOR AND PERVERSITY

By Brenda Spina, M.S., LMFT, LPC

“The lips of the righteous feed many, but fools die for lack of wisdom (heart).” (Proverbs 10:21) There is a kind of humor that seems to run through our culture that is worrisome. It is the kind of humor that is directly opposed to the “abundant life” that God has for each one of us. It is in our media. You see it in the television sitcoms every day. It is in families, couples and the relationship between parent and child. What troubles me even more is the reality of its presence in the church family. The kind of humor I am talking about has to do with the tearing down of another through sarcastic comments regarding one’s expression of themselves via their behavior, thoughts or feelings. It is the purposeful and conscious humiliation of one’s unique expression of themselves and the heart of their maker. It places one individual in an elevated position while at the same time the recipient of the joke is shamed. Are some of the statements humorous? Probably...but at who’s expense?

Proverbs 3:32 states, “For the perverse person is an abomination to the Lord...” (NKJV). To be perverse means to willfully do what is wrong or unreasonable. When we use humor that shames, tears down, is indirectly critical, or humiliating, we are willfully doing what is wrong and unreasonable in God’s eyes. It is a loathsome act to Him. “But people laugh along with it!” we say. This is sadly true. We all have been on the receiving end of this kind of behavior. Speaking from my own experience, there is an element of shock or surprise that often keeps me from responding in my own defense. The initial shock quickly follows with a sense of shame that is usually covered by a sharp sarcastic response of my own. I have come to hate this process in myself and in others. These kinds of interactions bring death to a relationship when left unchecked. They do not endear the person to the recipient or create an atmosphere in which intimacy can flourish. On the contrary, when faced honestly, it repulses and eventually brings death to one’s spirit and to the relationship’s ability to grow.

The kingdom of God is not based on crooked, false, or distorted statements about who He is and His commitment to us. Neither should our relationships with one another be based on such false representations of what being attached or connected means. People who use such bids for connections often secretly hate themselves. This kind of ‘connection’ is based in a need for power or to be the ‘top dog’, not in respect. Our verse in Proverbs states that “fools die for lack of wisdom.” The word wisdom here means ‘heart’. Individuals who have bought into this kind of humor delivered in a perverse manner are those who are in danger of shutting off their heart. This verse carries with it the suggestion that those who are wise in their relationships communicate with their heart. The Lord communicated His heart by sending His Son and continues to do so by providing His Word. May we never treat His bids for connection with us so

flippantly. May we respond to His bids for relationship with our hearts. May wisdom grow within us as we respond to Him. May God find each one of us an instrument whose lips feed many around us who are hungry for a heart relationship with Him.

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