

God's Plan of Salvation:

1. Hear - Romans 10:17
2. Believe - Mark 16:16
3. Repent - Acts 2:38
4. Confess - Romans 10:10
5. Be baptized - Acts 22:16
6. Live faithfully - Revelation 2:10

Announcements:

Sick: Mrs. Douglas, Mr. Douglas' mother, Mr. and Mrs. Hadley, Mrs. Elizabeth Jackson, Mr. Mathis, Lamar Mathis, Ms. Matchett, Mr. and Mrs. Pete Newsome, Mr. Sowder, Mr. Winns.

If you would be interested in any of the following ways to study the Bible, feel free to let us know:

- Home Bible Study - We will come into your home or other place you feel comfortable and study the Bible with you. Bible questions are welcome in these studies and we will seek to give a Bible answer.
- Correspondence courses - We will be glad to mail you a correspondence lesson that you can fill out and mail back to us and we will send you the next lesson.
- Call us with your Bible question - #503-707-6014.
- Visit our website:
www.oakgrovechurchofchristjenningsflorida.com.
- Come and visit - We always strive to have good, practical Bible instruction at each of our assemblies.

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Coarse Jesting

By Derek Long

The Bible describes for us attitudes and behaviors which are not fitting for Christians. In Ephesians 5:3-5 we are taught, "But fornication and all uncleanness or covetousness, let it not even be named among you, as is fitting for saints; neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks. For this you know that no fornicator, unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God." When we read this passage we must understand what the terms describe, so we know what kind of behavior to avoid. What does the Bible mean when it talks about "coarse jesting"?

The Greek word translated "coarse jesting" is "eutrapelia." The word is defined by W.E. Vine as, "properly denotes 'wit, facetiousness, versatility' (lit., 'easily turning,' from eu, 'well,' trepo, 'to turn'). It was used in the literal sense to describe the quick movements of apes and persons. Pericles speaks of the Athenians of his day (430 B.C.) as distinguished by a happy and gracious 'flexibility.' In the next century Aristotle uses it of 'versatility' in the give and take of social intercourse, quick repartee. In the sixth century B.C., the poet Pindar speaks of one Jason as never using a word of 'vain lightness,' a meaning approaching its latest use. Its meaning certainly deteriorated, and it came to denote 'coarse jesting, ribaldry,' as in Ephesians 5:4, where it follows morologia, 'foolish talking'" (Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words, W.E.

Vine, 333). While a definition like this is helpful. If you are like me, you might still be wondering what all is condemned by the term “coarse jesting.”

The Bible clearly shows God does not condemn all forms of humor. There are sections of the Bible where humorous statements are made (1 Kings 18:27; Psalm 115:4-8; Proverbs 26:14; Matthew 7:3-5; etc.). In addition, God is not opposed to all forms of laughter (Proverbs 15:13; Ecclesiastes 3:4). However, laughter should not be achieved through an unrighteous means. Here are some things people engage in today which seem to fall under the heading of “coarse jesting”:

1. To use a clean word in such a way that it carries an impure meaning or could be taken to mean something impure would possibly be a form of coarse jesting. Just because a word may not inherently be a “bad word” does not mean we can use it in any manner we want to. We should not take an otherwise good word and use it in a corrupt manner (Ephesians 4:29).
2. A person who takes an otherwise decent conversation and turns it in an indecent direction through a vulgar joke or anecdote. Our minds if they are filled with the right sort of thoughts (Philippians 4:8) will not go down this sort of path (Titus 1:15).
3. To joke about things of a sexual nature seems to be involved in the context. People degrade sexual relations when they make them the subject of jokes instead of seeing it as a gift from God to be shared between a husband and wife with thanksgiving (Hebrews 13:4).
4. Jokes which might give the impression we condone sin or engage in sin need to be avoided by a Christian. A Christian needs to want to avoid appearing to have any connection with sin. Remember 1 Thessalonians 5:22, “Abstain from every form of evil”!
5. Jokes which ridicule God, Jesus, the Bible, the church, etc. need to be avoided by children of God. Jokes which would be teaching something false need to be avoided.
6. If a joke must require a person to have a “dirty” mind to get it, then it is a joke a Christian needs to avoid.
7. Joking about something bad happening to other people is something the Christian needs to be careful about. Would we

want someone joking about the situation if we or someone we loved were in the situation (Matthew 7:12)?

8. If we are joking to be like the world or in an attempt to shock people, we need to avoid that sort of humor. People need to be shocked by our commitment to God and His word not our condoning of ungodly things.

You might find some more examples of things which could fit in the category of “coarse jesting” but I hope these things get us to think about this behavior. We need to remember God will hold us accountable for everything we say. Matthew 12:35-37 says, “A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good things, and an evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth evil things. But I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment. For by your words you will be justified; and by your words you will be condemned.” Before we engage in some sort of joking, we might ask the following questions: 1. Will this joke reflect a heart filled with good or evil things? 2. Will I want to have to give an account before God about the joke I am fixing to tell? 3. Will the joke I am about to tell result in me being justified or condemned? If we will honestly examine our humor by these guidelines, it will probably keep us away from “coarse jesting.”