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“Leadership is the art and science of inspiring others to reach their full potential in the pursuit of a common vision”

Dr. James Bultman

Today Reference



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Is Your Leadership a Joke?

A TCL E-Leadership Resource

Ephesians 4:29 Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.

1 Corinthians 4:2 Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful.

I am not sure how you feel, but I cannot imagine working in any business or ministry without some sort of humor peppered within the workday. When Solomon wrote in Ecclesiastes that the whole duty of man was to fear God, obey His commands, and therefore find enjoyment in all his work, I think that had to include a bit of fun and laughter. I think laughter and joy are sisters.

Can you or I remember a New Testament story that describes any laughter? I cannot remember or find an instance where Jesus told a joke or where He intended to be funny. What conclusion, if any, can or should we glean from this? What did Paul mean in our verse above about unwholesome talk? Was he trying to teach us not to joke around?

I suspect that most of us know when they hear a "clean" joke or a "dirty" one. Is an "unwholesome" joke somewhere in between? Does an unwholesome joke need to contain slang, ... or cursing? Does it contain sexual content or connotation? How can a Christian guard against using humor in ungodly ways? Does unwholesome talk refer only to humor? I suspect not. I believe it refers to everything that comes out of our mouth, things we type, and things we forward through our email.

Over fifteen years ago I was stopped by a traffic cop. He wrote me a ticket for what I believe even to this day was the most unbelievable citation ... (too long to explain, ...you will have to trust me on this one). In my disgust with this man, I told him he "was a jerk" and that he was just trying to "be a tough guy". I told this to his face ... several times.

That very night I went to lead my small group. Trying to be a transparent leader, and with some remorse, I shared with my group the whole story, including the exact language I used. At the end of my "testimony" there was a bit of laughter, undoubtedly because I got away with saying to this cop what some of my small group might like to say themselves. After the laughter died down, one elderly group member said to me "Ron, I cannot believe you said something like that", and after a pause she put the dagger in deeper with her final lament ... "you are our teacher".

The disappointment in her voice made an indelible mark on my heart that I will never forget. Our second reference verse above that I had marked in my Bible sprang from the closed Bible into my brain, now convicting me even more by my own yellow highlighter. I walked away that night with more than one lesson learned.

Friends and leaders ... watch your mouth, your words and your mouse. People are watching us and they are listening to us. Be careful with your humor for this you can be sure of ... leadership is a serious matter

it is no joke.

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