

General Topics :: A Culture of Levity - How Can We Not Succumb?

A Culture of Levity - How Can We Not Succumb? - posted by TaylorOtwell (), on: 2009/3/14 22:16

Family in Christ,

This is a topic I have pondered much. Obviously, our culture is obsessed with triviality and levity. It has even invaded churches and Christians. For instance, our conversations are often trivial, our musical lyrics are trivial, our games are trivial, TV is trivial, the news trivializes important topics, etc.

However, my main focus in bringing up this thread is Christian conversation (by conversation I mean actual speech - not the older use of the word which meant the entire behavior of the person). I would love to hear input from you all on ways you have found to stimulate edifying discussion with other believers while maintaining a cheerful attitude? Also, in what ways can we keep our minds and hearts fixed upon things above (Colossians 3), when there is always a temptation to be "light-hearted".

Note: I am not trying to condemn all fun or joy, I think enjoying a laugh with friends is acceptable.

With care in Christ,
Taylor

Re: A Culture of Levity - How Can We Not Succumb? - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2009/3/14 22:24

Quote:
-----Obviously, our culture is obsessed with triviality and levity.

Brother great topic. I really feel we need to start being busy with God's work and spreading the gospel. And others we see by our lives that are living in the light they will be convicted. The whole entire world is dying and going to hell and we have the command "go".

"go, send, or disobey." - John Piper.

I look forward to see what others think on this.

Re: A Culture of Levity - How Can We Not Succumb? - posted by ginnyrose (), on: 2009/3/14 22:44

Great topic... it will be very interesting to see what others will have to say.

For starters, one can always ask "what have you learned recently that has meant a lot to you?" or something along this vein. This will usually get people started. It is an open-ended question and you will likely have no idea where it will go to - makes for an interesting conversation.

Yes, I, too, get impatient with 'fluffy' conversations which is why I get tired waiting on customers at our GHs. However, once I realized that my job as a Christian is to present a cheerful face, demeanor to a sick world, it gave me much emotional strength to endure and persevere.

Hope you get a lot of responses...this could get very edifying and interesting!

ginnyrose

Re: - posted by TaylorOtwell (), on: 2009/3/14 23:03

Thanks for the responses.

I also try to ask questions like "What have you been reading in the Bible lately?". Often, a good conversation can be started that way, and it gives an opportunity for both involved to learn more about our Lord and His ways.

With care in Christ,
Taylor

Re: - posted by Dimlyviewed (), on: 2009/3/14 23:29

Its sad, because this triviality seems to invade even the conversations we think could be fruitful. Especially if you have differing theological perspectives. My experience has shown men this is a hard road to walk with believers (whom I disagree with on some things) who don't want to or care to explore their position on things...it is set in stone and that's all there is to it.

Am I trying to be right? No, I am only trying to become right in my understanding through the renewing and transforming of my mind...and if the Spirit indwells believers, I think our conversations are products of our sanctification.

We should consider the triviality of our every day conversations with unbelievers as well as believers in this same vein. Just my Humble Opinion...nothing more...

Re: - posted by rreighe (), on: 2009/3/15 0:53

wow i am so young at being a christian... i dont even know what that is?

Quote:

triv·i·al·i·ty

triv·i·al·i·ty
(plural triv·i·al·i·ties) or triv·i·al·ism (plural triv·i·alisms)
n

1. unimportance: the condition or quality of having little importance or seriousness
2. something unimportant: something that is considered to lack importance or seriousness

is that what yall are meaning? if so than this is such a broad subject. lets start with meaningless hollow tasks? wow it is hard to start a discussion without any idea where you want to go with it. right now trying to get a conversation about what is trivial, the conversation itself is becoming quite trivial unless someone finds something quite soon that we could discuss.

Re: A Culture of Levity - How Can We Not Succumb?, on: 2009/3/15 4:03

Stuffy?

One thing I learned a while back is to change my e-mail address and limit it to folks that won't send JUNK-JOKES
Forwarded 100 X's - when I saw that some bordered on immoral.

I believe as written in Nehemiah 8 -

9 And Nehemiah, which is the Tirshatha, and Ezra the priest the scribe, and the Levites that taught the people, said unto all the people, This day is holy unto the LORD your God; mourn not, nor weep. For all the people wept, when they heard the words of the law.

10 Then he said unto them, Go your way, eat the fat, and drink the sweet, and send portions unto them for whom nothing is prepared: for this day is holy unto our LORD: neither be ye sorry; **for the joy of the LORD is your strength.**

11 So the Levites stilled all the people, saying, Hold your peace, for the day is holy; neither be ye grieved.

Our JOY is our strength, but it comes from hearing the WORD and taking it "to heart".

That Pure Joy brings "pure" Joy to others.

It makes them thirst for that joy and then that opens the door to The Word to be shared.... the "reason for our hope."

Praise GOD! What Joy!

Re: A Culture of Levity - How Can We Not Succumb? - posted by JoanM, on: 2009/3/15 5:05

Good topic Taylor, for growth in Him.

The first time someone asked me at church, "How was your week?" instead of "How are you?", I learned a lot. Things happen in a week. It is a real invitation to conversation. It conveys the real love and interest we have for our brothers and sisters. Whenever I am moved to say that, I notice a pause before people answer. That causes me to expect something from God and listen for that. If they cannot step up, you can. The question to you then is Did you meet God this week? If not, fix that. Start by confessing that right there and then.

If it is alive, if there is life in it, it IS interesting. Talk about what God is doing in your life, conviction, victories, reconciliation. Hungry people will identify and ask you more, feeding people with offer what is alive in their life.

Both believers and unbelievers love fruit. It's hard to resist that offering. For real. In the presence of fruit (here I am talking about the fruit of the Spirit), it just doesn't seem long before real needs, real interests come forward. I remember one long conversation, filled with divine love with an unbeliever. I had a reason to not speak directly about Christ. Slowly they inched toward Him. As my expectation increased, I could only pray and I really wondered how far God was going to go. I gave up when they said, "You know what I really need is a friend that would die for me." I just had to respond to that. Any believer would.

Dimlyviewed, an interest in theological clarity is important. There are brothers that can discuss this with you particularly if they are more mature than you, without the difficulty you mention. I'm kinda thinking that you have a heart for evangelism. Staying with your own application of Truth that week and the fruit of it, reduces what might end up in vain disputation. I can't quite remember Ravenhill's good point on that (a man with theology verse a man with experience- a living theology). In a sense, the best position to explore with another believer is our real life position. I think that is part of what is meant by the ground is level at the Cross. Wouldn't that be the same with unbelievers?

Even gossip can be redeemed if you gossip about God.

What else. I expect to see God, His Word everywhere because He is. Today, when a new believer said she was caring for an older church member I said how loving and caring she was (she has the gift of helps maybe). She replied she wasn't always like that and recently decided specifically she needed to do more of that. You could hear in her voice that seemed strange to her. In a heart beat we were rejoicing that Phi. 2:13 was alive in her. That was some serious Joy. It helped her understand how new life was, made it less strange I guess. A lot of encouraging is just seeing and pointing God out. Gee, maybe that is all of what encouragement is.

Thank you Taylor for this thought to meditate on.

Joy - the Serious Business of Heaven is a sermon from Lou Sutera you might enjoy. I have seen it in text as a booklet. I heard it once in 1991 but it must talk about this. Lou is so Philippians: He just jumps into the water and splashes and everyone gets wet. :-)

Re: A Culture of Levity - How Can We Not Succumb? - posted by AbideinHim (), on: 2009/3/15 8:17

Thank you Taylor for bringing up this topic.

Some of the most spiritual people that I know have a good sense of humor and are fun to be around, but we can really locate a person spiritually by the words of their mouth, "for out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaks." What we spend our time thinking about and meditating on is what we will also spend our time talking about.

We should not try to be what we are not, but just be who we are in Christ. Allow Christ to live in us, and those that are hungry and thirsty for God will desire what we have, while those that love their sin will be repelled by us.

May our prayer be that the words of our mouth, and the meditation of our heart would be acceptable in God's sight.

Mike

Re: - posted by TaylorOtwell (), on: 2009/3/15 9:24

Thanks for the responses so far. I thought I would go ahead and list a few quotes/resources that may be helpful to you all.

Sermon by William Shishko - One of the best sermons I have heard in a long time (since I first heard Paul Washer) - (<http://www.sermonaudio.com/sermoninfo.asp?SID8708218548>) How Are You Using Your Time?

Also, in Thomas Watson's book "The Great Gain of Godliness" published by Banner of Truth, there is an entire chapter devoted to Christian speech.

I would recommend "A Puritan Golden Treasury" to all. It is simply a book full of Puritan quotes organized by topic. There is a quote from Richard Baxter in there that says (I am remembering it the best I can, because I can't locate the quote right now) - "O, sirs, speak of sin as sin, and heaven and hell as they are, and not as in jest".

"I remember he advised me wholly to abandon young company and associate myself with grave elderly people, which counsel I followed." - David Brainerd's Diary

"If we desire to be in earnest in the great work of salvation, every pursuit and enjoyment must be given up which hinders the effect of the gospel upon the mind, or loosens its hold upon the heart." - Matthew Henry

"It raises the passions above their proper tone and thus induces a dislike for those grave and serious subjects of life which have nothing but their simplicity and importance to recommend them. It kindles low and base appetites and creates a constant craving after their indulgence... it gradually numbs the conscience into an insensibility of good morals." - J.A. James (speaking of the theatre - I think he was referring to what we call "plays", but we could surely apply this to many other things.)

"Sober me when I am glad with a joy that is not from thee" - Valley of Vision (Puritan prayers)

With care in Christ,
Taylor

Edit - Also, there is a sermon on Christian speech in "To The Rising Generation" - a book of Jonathan Edwards' sermons to young people.

*Edit2 - John Piper - (<http://www.desiringgod.org/ResourceLibrary/MediaPlayer/3633/Video/>) What Does It Mean To Take the Lord's Name in Vain?