

**Using Smiley Faces - posted by HeartSong, on: 2010/1/2 1:43**

Using Smiley Faces

Just last week changes were made to the format that is used in creating posts to the forum on SermonIndex. Generally, the changes seemed to restrict the use of symbols and color. Very little reason was given as to why these changes were made, so I began to ponder the possible reasoning behind the changes. Below are some of the things that I have considered.

The words that we choose are of great importance. In John 1:1 the Lord declares that "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." Clearly the Lord intends that our words should carry great weight and when one considers that it was by the Word that all things were made, the power of the word becomes evident.

As Christians, we should not need to use smiley faces and graphics to convey the meaning of what we are saying. The words we use should be clear and concise, and if they are not, we should endeavor that they be so and there is no better place to practice than on SermonIndex. Our tone should be even and gracious. Huge colored letters scream for attention and assault the reader. This is not the way of our Lord.

To some degree, the use of smiley faces is like hiding behind a mask. This is the way of the world, to hide behind a smile, as if all is well just because I have a smile on my face. Some of the most miserable people I know run around smiling all of the time, but their words bely their true condition. We should not be using a mask - our yea should be yea, and our nay should be nay.

Often I have seen the smiley face used after a cruel, or rude, comment - as if this somehow justifies the arrogance of what was written. Awhile back I read something to the effect that the smiley face helps to show the intention of what is written. There is something wrong with this thinking. A rude comment is a rude comment regardless of the intention behind it and adding a smiley face only serves to amplify the offense.

Lastly, to see people purposely purporting something that has clearly been restricted is quite grievous and most unChristlike.

**Re: Using Smiley Faces - posted by MaryJane, on: 2010/1/2 2:02**

Dear Heartsong

I have to respectfully disagree with you. I think that there are times when no matter how much we try to convey our thoughts with another person in a loving manner, there is always the possibility that the person on the receiving end will misunderstand or read more into what was meant by the writer. I know that I myself have done this on occasion. I have been overly sensitive and had my feelings hurt because I put emotions and motives behind what another wrote instead of simply taking what they said as it was written. I have also been on the other end and had someone else misunderstand what I was trying to say. Thankfully on the few occasions this has happened those who were unsure of what I was saying came to me and things were explained in further detail and there was no strife or hard feelings.

As for smiley faces, there is probably some truth in what you shared about people lashing out at others and then including a smiley face as if to deflect from the cutting remark or comment. However there are many times when a smiley face does convey the writer's heart, a heart and attitude of sisterly love for a fellow believer.

God Bless you sister  
maryjane

Edit: After I first posted I went back to reading some devotional and I came across this and thought it just really was so beautiful.

The King is smiling your direction. If you'll look at Him, and bow before Him right now, you'll see "When the King smiles, there is Life; His favor refreshes like a gentle rain" (Prov. 16:15)

**Re: - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2010/1/2 5:07**

Quote:  
-----As Christians, we should not need to use smiley faces and graphics to convey the meaning of what we are saying. The words we use should be clear and concise, and if they are not, we should endeavor that they be so and there is no better place to practice than on SermonIndex. Our tone should be even and gracious. Huge colored letters scream for attention and assault the reader. This is not the way of our Lord.  
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Amen sister, some great points.

I have wanted to make these changes for literally years. I am happy with the current format. I do feel that "simplicity" is something that puts sermonindex in a different category than many other forum websites.

I have grown much in my ability to convey my thoughts with written communication, primarily this has been because of my interactions on the sermonindex board. It does take a lot of effort to bring your feelings across in type so people can know how you feel and not just read your writing as cold hard facts.

I do see some drawbacks with not having the smiley faces and color but I feel in the end this is a much better way for this ministry.

You are always welcome to do this saints :)

**Re: - posted by wayneman (), on: 2010/1/2 8:44**

:-)

Nyuk nyuk nyuk

**Re: Using Smiley Faces - posted by KingJimmy (), on: 2010/1/2 9:55**

Quote:  
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To some degree, the use of smiley faces is like hiding behind a mask. This is the way of the world,  
-----

I'm sorry sister, I must respectfully disagree. When you talk in real life, do you talk in a stoic like manner, with no facial expressions whatsoever? Of course not. Body language and facial expressions are an integral part of communication, without which we can be easily misunderstood.

I LOVE using smiley faces on the internet. ;-) I smile a lot in real life, because I'm full of joy and generally a pretty happy guy. My former pastor even noticed that when I preach a stern message, I have a tendency to smile. Sometimes I come across harsher online than I do in person, not because I say things differently, but because you don't hear the inflection in my voice to judge my tone and you do not see my body language. These things are very important in communication.

But these things are very hard to display on the internet, for which the use of smiley faces and such can be skillfully employed to TRY and convey the tone of what we are talking about. The only time I never use smiley faces on the internet is when I write an essay. And that's simply because during an essay I try to speak a lot more scholarly, and in a different manner than I would on a simple interpersonal communication on a forum on the internet. In that context, I labor to say things in a very different manner.

Although in that context I will sometimes make limited use of emphasis techniques. Sometimes I will use bold, italics, or underline things. Why? Well, that's been the way of the world for thousands of years. Even the Hebrew prophets in their writings did such. But instead of putting something in bold, they repeated themselves twice. Or even the apostle Paul even admitted to writing in big letters to drive home a point. Or he admitted to writing in tears and with emotion. Had e

moticons been around 2,000 years ago, there is NO DOUBT, the apostle Paul would've employed them in his writings. If he were on the internet today, Paul would use smiley and sad faces.

So to summarize, I must respectfully disagree. It's not in keeping of sound communication principles, and actually violates the means Biblical authors themselves employed.

:~)

**Re: Using Smiley Faces - posted by live4jc, on: 2010/1/2 12:05**

I believe that the warmth of our Christian love for one another can be conveyed with or without smiley faces. Personally, I feel that God has given us joy and the ability to smile as gifts, though as has been pointed out, sometimes a smile can be misused and may not always represent a pure and loving heart.

One thing I think we should strive for, in our communication, is that 'brotherly love' is cultivated. The apostle Paul's letters had many admonishments and warnings in them, but he also communicated a great depth of affection for his brothers and sisters in Christ in what he wrote. It seems like the Bible is telling us that an undertone of seriousness and sobriety of speech should mark our Christian conversation, because the time is short and we are engaged in a battle for the souls of men. At the same time, it seems to me that our interactions with one another should lead to one another feeling encouraged and loved in way that is deep and profound.

When unbelievers looked at the way the early Christians interacted, they were struck by how they loved one another. It was evident to all who observed them. The early Christians greeted one another with a holy kiss, though today a holy hug, might be more in keeping with how we would show love to one another, if we got to know each other in person. Periodically, I've read posts that have pointed out that there are challenges in conveying this same richness of affection online, and this is something I have found to be true as well. At the same time, it's amazing the sense of closeness that can be experienced online, between brothers and sisters who share a common purpose and common passion- the Lord Jesus Christ !

I remember reading one thread, a while back, in which the posters obviously disagreed with one another, but even more evident than their disagreement, was the love for one another that showed through in their posts. Many times throughout their posts could be found phrases such as "You know I love you dear brother" and that sort of thing. This it seems, is the spirit of forgiveness and restoration that is a hallmark of revivals when they occur, and which itself paves the way for revivals to take place.

Just wanted to share a few thoughts. Also, if I have caused offense in anything I have written in any of my posts to anyone, could you please forgive me ?

In Christ's love,  
John

**Re: - posted by wind\_blows, on: 2010/1/2 13:16**

God is so good and so kind in His mercy :)

with much love

your little sis in Him  
Elizabeth

**Re: - posted by HeartSong, on: 2010/1/2 14:18**

As I was reading the replies, another thought crossed my mind.

Would the Holy Spirit prefer to work through words, or a symbol? I think that the enemy endeavors to limit the Holy Spirit by getting us to use something other than words to express that which He would have us to say.

Just for clarification, when Greg said "You are always welcome to do this saints :)" - I think he meant that we can use the colon and end quote instead of the little round yellow smiley.

Personally, since writing this, I am finding it difficult to replace the smiley with words. It used to be that I never used a smiley face, and I am becoming more and more convinced that that is the way that the Lord would have me to go. Please do not take this to mean that I think that we should never smile, for when the Lord lights us up on the inside, one can not help but to grin from ear to ear.

I love you my brothers and sisters!

**Re: - posted by ccchhhrrriiss (), on: 2010/1/2 15:01**

Hello...

I really don't agree that those who use "smiley faces" are "hiding behind a mask." Regardless of your conviction, a :) is the same as a :- ) -- just a little more colorful.

I wanted to add something else. I traveled to the indigenous Tarahumara tribes deep within the Sierra Madre Occidental in Chihuahua. The Tarahumara do not speak Spanish (let alone English). They are a quiet and reclusive people. They live far outside of modern society...and many still live in caves. There is no electricity, running water, stores or money. They have no written language (and if they did, few would even be able to read it). Yet I noticed that one thing that they did understand was...a smile.

After all, *"A merry heart doeth good like a medicine: but a broken spirit drieth the bones"* (Proverbs 17:22).

:-)

**Re: - posted by HeartSong, on: 2010/1/2 15:55**

Chris, your example really does not work here. We all speak English.

Unfortunately, when I now see people using the little yellow round faces here on SI, instead of a merry heart, they scream of rebellion. The tool was removed from the toolbox. It is now our choice to either rebel, or comply. If we choose to rebel, we should search our hearts to determine the reason. As a guest, it would not be the way of Christ to go against that which has been suggested by the host.

We just finished studying John 8 in BSF and I am finding it fascinating in the way that it applies to so many things in life. We are judged in the knowing.

**Re: - posted by ChrisJD (), on: 2010/1/2 16:25**

Hi everyone.

Some people may not be aware of the changes that have been made and why they were made, but they may still be able to use the different features that are apparently still in place because of knowing how to do them manually.

I for one, did not know that we are not supposed to use the bold or italic features anymore?

Really I'm not sure any of this is exactly clear?

At least we ought to be more cautious before accusing the different forum members here of being in rebellion?

Greg, what exactly is going on?

**Re: - posted by MaryJane, on: 2010/1/2 16:39**

Greetings ChrisJD

I was just about to post the exact same thing that you did.

Heartsong, I think that we should be much more cautious then to accuse someone that has used a smile face of being in rebellion until things are made clear as to what is permissible.

In all honestly I did not even think that when the format was changed that Greg was now making a "no smile face" rule. I t never even occurred to me. I actually never used those buttons when I posted to the forum before. I always typed in a colon, dash, and parenthesis to make my little yellow smile face.

Greg, I to am in need to some clarification as I do not want to break the rules.

thank you  
God Bless  
mj

**Re: - posted by hmmhmm (), on: 2010/1/2 16:43**

Quote:

-----Greg, what exactly is going on?  
-----

brother Greg posted a while back this  
([https://www.sermonindex.net/modules/newbb/viewtopic.php?topic\\_id31950&forum16&9](https://www.sermonindex.net/modules/newbb/viewtopic.php?topic_id31950&forum16&9)) redesign

I just think he wants to "simplify" the forum, you are still able to make bold and italics through bbcode , or "manually" so to speak. This is a quote from one of the sticky post in the support forum.

Quote:  
-----BBCode Here is some of the common BBcodes that are used. Please note that I cannot type the code exactly like I would or you will not be able to read it. Instead of using 's I will use { } . {code} instead of Many of these you can just use the tools mentioned above, but some prefer to just type the code themselves. It's quicker for me to just type them. Bold {b} your text here {/b} Italics {i}Your text here {/i} Underlined {u} Your text here {/u} Quoting {quote} insert your quote here{/quote}  
-----

So italics and bold would be very ok and fine to use

**Re: - posted by ChrisJD (), on: 2010/1/2 17:06**

Christian,

Thank you. I did see the link that you posted here from Greg a while back but it didn't register with me exactly what was going on.

Since there is functionality left in 'BBCode' should there be a list of what things are not appropriate to use while that functionality is still in place?

Thanks,

Chris

**Re: - posted by MaryJane, on: 2010/1/2 18:16**

Greetings hmmhmm

Thank you for explaining some of this. I am just wondering then since making a yellow smile face is still possible manually is it ok and fine to do so? You mentioned that it is fine to use the bold and italics but I still am unsure about the use of a smile face?

Sorry to bother you on such things but just trying to understand what the rules are governing these things.

Thank you and God bless  
maryjane

**Re: - posted by hmmhmm (), on: 2010/1/2 18:31**

Quote:  
-----I still am unsure about the use of a smile face?  
-----

I am not 100% sure myself yet, i will ask brother Greg for a more specific guideline for posting. Since he is in Nepal right now and i ask all have some patience until he have a bit more time.

**Re: - posted by MaryJane, on: 2010/1/2 18:44**

Greetings hmmhmm

Thank you for your response. I totally understand that Greg is busy I appreciate your heart and care in looking into this for us.

Thank you very much  
God bless  
maryjane

**Re: - posted by ccchhrrriiiss (), on: 2010/1/2 20:26**

Hi HeartSong...

Quote:  
-----Chris, your example really does not work here. We all speak English.  
-----

Yes, but not everyone speaks English with kindness (or clarity). Thus, a smile can sometimes indicate a little more of the attitude behind the words in a post.

Quote:  
-----Unfortunately, when I now see people using the little yellow round faces here on SI, instead of a merry heart, they scream of rebellion. The tool was removed from the toolbox. It is now our choice to either rebel, or comply. If we choose to rebel, we should search our hearts to determine the reason. As a guest, it would not be the way of Christ to go against that which has been suggested by the host.  
-----

Sister, I have not seen a prohibition toward smileys. If this was prohibited, I would certainly refrain from them (even if I possibly disagreed with the rationale). I have noticed that it can be very easy to voice determinations about the underlying condition of others (whether a lack of faith for using medicine, evil masquerading behind "smileys" or "rebellion" for even using them or mentioning a view about them). I think that it is much better to avoid drawing a quick or cynical conclusion about such things (especially publicly).

Just because someone thinks that a smiley represents "wearing a mask" or "rebellion" doesn't make it true. In fact, I think that it is sad that we should be forced to adhere to someone's own particular concept of what is pure or not. The Scriptures are clear that "*Unto the pure all things are pure: but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled*" (Titus 1:15). I can sympathize with your personal conviction against "smileys," but I really think that it is a stretch to suggest that they are evil (or that the intentions of each person who uses them is evil).

I did see the thread about changes on the website, but I didn't see any sort of specific prohibition about bold type, italics or smileys. In fact, I don't think that I have ever seen this brought up until after you raised the issue in this thread (although I suppose that I could have missed it over the years). Is it really that much of a problem as to necessitate a rule about it? Personally, I think that there might be something wrong if, by an active imagination, we conjure up assumptions of evil simply from seeing a tiny yellow smile face that someone includes in a post. I have known plenty of godly men and women here over the years who used them and I never assumed anything evil behind it. My own mother uses them often in instant messages that she writes to me, and they are only meant to convey a happy thought or a cheerful attitude. I suppose that some people might use them deceptively...but I certainly wouldn't consider that the "norm."

Of course, Greg is the authority over this website, and I will certainly abide by any decision that he makes. As Brother HmmmHm stated, Greg is busy with the Lord's work in Nepal. I suppose that he will offer more clarity when he has the time. Until then, I would kindly suggest that we don't assume the worst if someone uses them.

May the Lord lead us all in a more excellent way.

**Re: - posted by HeartSong, on: 2010/1/2 21:50**

Quote:

-----sermonindex said:

I do see some draw backs with not having the smiley faces and color but I feel in the end this is a much better way for this ministry.

-----  
This is perfectly clear to me. Is it not to everyone else?

**Re: - posted by MaryJane, on: 2010/1/2 22:10**

Edited

**Re: - posted by chapel (), on: 2010/1/2 22:30**

Quote:

-----Quote:

sermonindex said:

I do see some draw backs with not having the smiley faces and color but I feel in the end this is a much better way for this ministry.

-----  
This is perfectly clear to me. Is it not to everyone else?

-----  
Yes, very it is what Greg feels is best for the ministry.

**Re: Using Smiley Faces - posted by ginnyrose (), on: 2010/1/2 22:37**

I think this entire issue is similar to straining at a gnat and swallowing a camel!

There are so many serious issues facing Christians and some are in a wad about the use of smileys! Come on!....Someone told me a sister took offense at the idea that its use is an act of rebellion...

SIGH. SIGH.

ginnyrose

**Re: - posted by MaryJane, on: 2010/1/2 23:19**

Greetings Ginnyrose

Thank you for this reminder.

God Bless  
mj

**Re: - posted by Giggles (), on: 2010/1/3 0:28**

Quote:

-----I think this entire issue is similar to straining at a gnat and swallowing a camel!

There are so many serious issues facing Christians and some are in a wad about the use of smileys! Come on!....Someone told me a sister took offense at the idea that its use is an act of rebellion...

SIGH. SIGH.

ginnyrose

Amen

**Re: - posted by ccchhrrriiisss (), on: 2010/1/3 0:41**

Amen, Sister Ginnyrose. Thank you for a timely reminder.

**Re: - posted by HeartSong, on: 2010/1/4 2:56**

Well, there is more to this smiley face thing than I originally thought. First of all I was surprised by some of the reactions here on SermonIndex. It seems like such a little thing, not using a smiley face, but obviously that is not the case.

Just the other day, I found myself using a smiley face on about 8 posts in a row on facebook. I remember thinking "that's odd, I wonder why I am using this thing so much." And now, I am attempting to not use it at all and am finding it very difficult. Somehow it seems that it is almost required for everything that I write. There is really something seriously wrong with using these things.

Smiley face addiction - who would have thought - but now I see them everywhere. Tonight I was having dinner out and glanced up to see one on the television. And then a few seconds later, there was another one - and another, and another. A whole commercial about happy faces???

Each person must decide for himself whether or not this is something to be cautious about. As in all addictions, some people are more susceptible than others, but I contend that it is no small thing and just the fact that we are offended by the thought of not using them should be a warning in itself.

**Re: Using Smiley Faces - posted by Lysa (), on: 2010/1/4 7:01**

Quote:

-----Greg wrote:

I do see some draw backs with not having the smiley faces and color but I feel in the end this is a much better way for this ministry.

You are always welcome to do this saints :)

-----

I can't believe that this has garnered three pages!!

Let's face reality, Greg never said SI was a NO smiley zone and they were not allowed!

He said (read his last sentence above), we are always welcome to use this-> :)

So we can :) away to each other or :( away, depending on your personality!!

God bless you all!! :):)

**Re: Using Smiley Faces - posted by hmmhmm (), on: 2010/1/4 7:45**

Brother Greg told me he will in a near future take away the possibility to make the "colorful" smiley faces. So the only ones you will be able to make are these :) .

This is Greg's wish for the forum and the direction he wishes to take it. The fact it has generated three pages says something even if I am not sure what, but I do agree there is something "hokey" about them. As Art Katz used to say (edit: Art did not say smiley faces was hokey, he used the word, that was my meaning, and somehow I think there is something "superficial" about them and in the use of them). And yet as a speaker of English as a second language I have found smiley's sometimes have helped me convey my heart about something that I failed to express in words.

**Re: - posted by MaryJane, on: 2010/1/4 14:04**

This morning I woke up from the most terrible dream. It was almost a replay of a time in my life that happened exactly ten years ago to this day. It was such a painful and confusing time for me that I wondered why I would have such a dream that reminded me of all those past attitudes. As I prayed about it I realized that Father was showing me that I have allowed myself to get caught up in such silly and stupid distractions lately that I have taken my focus off of Him. Ten years ago I was overly sensitive, easily offended and quick to get angry, but ten years ago I was not walking with Jesus as I am now. The convicting truth that I had to examine is that I have allowed myself to stumble back into sinful patterns of self and I need to repent of this.

For me when I first posted a response to this thread it was not at all about the actual use of the yellow smile graphic, but in my flesh I let it become about that. I want to apologize for that, in the future I pray that I will not allow self to have free reign but that I will walk out each day living in submission to His will, that His heart and attitudes will be reflected in all that I say and do as I endeavor to share with others here on SI. A smile to me is nothing more than a way of showing someone that we care about them but using them or not here in the forum is not a big deal, truly Jesus is what matters!

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hmmhmm you wrote: And yet as a speaker of English as a second language I have found smiley's sometimes have helped me convey my heart about something that I failed to express in words

-----  
I just wanted to say thank you for having such a giving heart, English is my first language and I have found at times that I struggle with how to express my own heart too.

Ginnyrose: sister thank you again for your willingness to lovingly point out what should have been obvious to me. You are such an encouragement to me. I did pass along your message to WB and while she is not coming back I do think she will be in good hands...His hands!

God Bless

maryjane

PS I have one last thing I wanted to share here with everyone. It is small poem written by a nine year old little girl who was Pondering her Maker/King/Messiah

A crooked smile, laid on His face,

A smile more pretty than diamonds, gold, or lace,

Twinkling eyes calm and silent,

He loved everyone, even the violent.

He loves you and me!

It seems that Jesus would be hard not to love—

Wouldn't you agree?

**Re: - posted by HeartSong, on: 2010/1/4 16:26**

I would like to share something also, this morning I was reading Matthew 13:47-48

"Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net, that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind: Which, when it was full, they drew to shore, and sat down, and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away."

Isn't that the most beautiful thing you have ever heard?

The kingdom of heaven being cast like a net . . .

I love you all!

**Re: - posted by Koheleth, on: 2010/1/5 13:27**

Quote:

-----by HeartSong on 2010/1/4 13:26:17

I would like to share something also, this morning I was reading Matthew 13:47-48

"Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net, that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind: Which, when it was full, they drew to shore, and sat down, and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away."

Isn't that the most beautiful thing you have ever heard?

The kingdom of heaven being cast like a net . . .

-----

I cannot tell which is the most beautiful.

1. The kingdom of heaven is cast like a net.
2. It gathers of every kind.
3. It is filled full.
4. It is drawn to the shore.

5. They kept the good and got rid of the bad.

All of those are most beautiful truths to my soul. The kingdom of heaven is glorious already, and I am exceedingly glad to even know of it!

**Re: - posted by Sems (), on: 2010/1/7 14:51**

Personally I am stunned that there was a big fuss about smileys...I mean..there are weightier things to talk about. I respect Greg but I am sure that this was a totally non-essential & unnecessary issue to bring up. Anyway, I hope my comments would not start another round...May God help sermonindex to focus on the essentials..God bless:

**Re: - posted by wind\_blows, on: 2010/1/7 15:48**

Hey Sems

You know I agree in many ways there was a big fuss made about smileys and there are truly more important issues than this one for many. However I would just like to add that in this seemingly unimportant topic I learned a few things about myself that I was not aware of before and that I needed to die to. Things that were sin and I needed to repent of. I know that mj and heartsong shared some things that the Lord was showing them as well. So yes it was not as important a topic as some on the forum, but for me and maybe a few others it meant something. I know it really helped me to see how much in every day little tiny parts of my life I need Jesus. I need to make sure that I am walking in a way with others that is pleasing to Him and not about self. So for me this was a really important thread. I know that it taught me the value of seeking to communicate in such a way as to not cause offense or to allow one self to be easily offended. Those at least for me are pretty important lessons and I am thankful for them.

I was thinking about this thread and considering, isn't a part of revival about the sinner seeing their need for Jesus in their life? If it is, then at least for me, this thread did end up serving a purpose even though at first glance it seems silly :) I now know I need Him not just in the major things but in "ALL" things.

with much love  
your sis in Him  
ebeth