



“A merry heart does good like a medicine, but a broken spirit dries the bones.” Proverbs 17:22

O, go ahead! Laugh out loud right now! Don't be so sanctimonious! It may not be religiously proper, but it is a spiritual force this merry heart business! Jesus was attractive to the children and He was attractive to sinners! “You have loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even Your God, hath anointed You with the oil of gladness above Your fellows.” (Hebrews 1:9). Even the religious folks were attracted to Him! But often His demeanor was a barrier too great for them to overlook! After all, they considered Him too irreverent, too “natural” to be a “holy man” like themselves! “That night Matthew invited Jesus and his disciples to be his dinner guests, along with his fellow tax collectors and many other notorious sinners. The Pharisees were indignant. “Why does your teacher eat with such scum?” they asked his disciples.” (Matthew 9:10 – 11 NLT). Religious Pharisees can be unreasonable and blind to their own hatred of joy. It is said that the great Reformationist John Calvin once had a man imprisoned for three days just for smiling during a baptism!

Of course, we understand that it wasn't merely Jesus' laughter that touched people's lives; it was the Anointing of God issuing forth from His life, His words, and His prayer. The laughter may have caught people's attention but it was the Anointing that changed their hearts! Joy is always an indicator of the presence of God! “In Your presence is fullness of joy...” (Psalm 16:11). To lose your joy is to lose something of the presence and power of God in your life! (Loss of joy is one of the first tell-tell symptoms of encroaching legalism.)

Funny thing – as we like to be around someone who has a merry heart and so does God! Yes, the Lord likes to be around people who enjoy and love life! It is with a joyful noise we are to enter the Lord's presence and even our giving is to be accompanied with a certain joyfulness. (Psalm 89:15; Psalm 100; 2 Corinthians 9:7). “The spirit of a man will sustain his infirmity, but a wounded spirit, who can bear?” (Proverbs 18:14). It's better to laugh! Joy produces a healing flow. Laughter is the spirit's vitamins and tonic!

“I love to laugh, long and loud and clear. I love to laugh, so everybody can hear!”¹

¹From Walt Disney's “Marry Poppins.”

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