




FEARS, TEARS & JEERS:

Staying positive
in a negative world, Lesson 10



Can you see why?

- ...why this series is relevant to us today?
- ...why mankind has much to fear, from within and without?
- ...why our fears can hinder us from being positive?

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- The FEAR of eternal insecurity...
 - The FEAR of death...
 - The FEAR of failure...
 - The FEAR of choosing...
 - The FEAR of strongholds...
 - The FEAR of problems...
 - and the FEAR of success?




Can you see why?

- ...why mankind has much to cry about? There is an abundance of pain, suffering, and hurt.
- ...why our emotional, mental, physical, financial, and spiritual pain can hinder us from being positive?



Can you see why?


- ...why mankind is full of mockers?
- ...why mockery, ridicule, disdain, insult and scorn can hinder us from being positive?


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- In spite of the fears—real or imagined;
 - In spite of the tears—real or imagined;
 - In spite of the jeers—real or imagined...
 - ...can you see why it's important for CHRISTIANS of all people to stay positive?
 - Why would the Lord be honored and glorified more if His people stayed positive...as opposed to negative?



Let's dive back into jeers.

- **Jeer** = to speak in mockery or derision; to scoff or laugh with contempt; to pour scorn on.
- **Mock** = to treat with ridicule, disdain, open contempt or scorn; to deride; to imitate in derision or sport; to make fun of.

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- **Sarcasm** = a taunting or contemptuously ironic remark
 - **Cynicism** = a belief that all human action has selfish motives (ie, “what’s in it for me?”)

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- “Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me.”
 - **WRONG!** Jeers can lead to fears and tears, which can last for years...even a lifetime. We need healing from the jeers in order to stay positive!



Jeers can come from many directions:


Inside a person, jeers can originate from:


- Misunderstandings
- Differing perspectives
- Jealousies
- Prejudices
- Unreasonableness, brutishness
- Unbelief
- Competition




Interpersonally, jeers can come from:

- Satan and demons
- Close family and friends
- People at work
- Neighbors
- Total strangers
- Fellow Christians

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- As I alluded to last week, if you want to excel in interpersonal relations, I would submit that “jeers” and “sneers” are not particularly constructive.


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- Last week, we went through all of the New Testament mentions of the word “mock.” Ironically, the person who was most frequently mocked in Scripture was Jesus Himself.


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- The servant is not above his master. If Jesus was mocked, then the more we grow in Him, the more we are transformed into His image, the more influence and impact we have for Him, then the more mocked we will most likely will be. Therefore...
 - We need to have “strong stomachs!”
 - We cannot be easily offended, quick to respond and defend ourselves.




Let's continue our study of Scripture

- Jesus was mocked by Satan in Matthew chapter 4 when he was tempted in the wilderness...
- *“If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread.”*
- Jesus' response: The Word!


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- *“If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, HE SHALL GIVE HIS ANGELS CHARGE CONCERNING THEE: and IN THEIR HANDS THEY SHALL BEAR THEE UP, LEST AT ANY TIME THOU SHALT DASH THY FOOT AGAINST A STONE.”*
 - Jesus’ response: The Word.


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- *“All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me.”*
 - Jesus’ response: The Word.
 - When we are mocked, sometimes the best way to respond is with The Word.





Generally speaking, Jesus was not mocked by the
“common folk” but by the “elite:”


- Well-educated intellectuals
- Government officials and leaders
- Religious officials and leaders


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- In Matthew 9:11, the Pharisees said, “*Why eateth your Master with publicans and sinners?*”
 - Sometimes, it’s your mercy that people mock.


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- When Jesus cast out the demon from the dumb man in Matthew 9:32-34, instead of praising God for what happened, the Pharisees say, “*He casteth out demons through the prince of the devils.*”
 - The issues? Mercy and envy.


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- In Matthew 12:1-2, Jesus' disciples plucked ears of corn and ate on the Sabbath. But the Pharisees said, "*Behold, thy disciples do that which is not lawful to do upon the sabbath day.*"
 - Again, the issues are mercy and envy. Jesus was mocked because He was merciful.


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- In Matthew 12:13-14, Jesus heals a man's hand on the sabbath day. The Pharisees respond by holding a council to discuss how to destroy Jesus.
 - Again, it's a matter of mercy and envy.


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- In Matthew 12:22-24, Jesus heals the man with a demon, blind, and dumb. The Pharisees said, *“This fellow doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub, the prince of the devils.”*
 - Envy and jealousy at work, again!
 - This is the first time Jesus calls them “vipers” (venomous snakes).


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- Venom = a poisonous secretion transmitted by a sting or a bite.
 - He rebukes their speech because it reveals the evil in their hearts.
 - What about you? Are you venomous?


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- In Matthew 16, the Pharisees and Sadducees tempted Jesus to show a sign that He was the Christ.
 - That was a form of mocking because they had already seen and heard about the many miracles He did. How much more evidence did they need?


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- In Matthew 21:14-16, Jesus heals the blind and lame. *“And when the chief priests and scribes saw the wonderful things that he did, and the children crying in the temple, and saying, Hosanna to the son of David; they were sore displeased.”*
 - Jealousy and envy at work, again!


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- People who are mockers are often intellectually dishonest. They think they are so smart, but they cannot handle smart, reasoned debate. In Matthew 21:23, the chief priests and scribes ask Jesus by what authority he did what He did.
 - Jesus' answer was a question: by what authority did John baptize people? They couldn't answer him. Jesus outfoxed them, exposing their "agenda."


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- In Matthew 22:15-18, the Pharisees sought to entangle Jesus in his speech by asking about paying taxes.
 - Again, He outfoxed them. Of course, He was the mind of God being intellectually challenged by the minds of His created beings. Hmmm. Who would win that battle every time?


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- These days, Christians are often mocked in our culture as mental midgets...in reality, we have access to the mind of God through the Word and the Holy Spirit. By the power and grace of God, we have the potential to be far more “intelligent” than unbelievers.
 - God loves to confound the so-called wise!


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- Case in point: Creation vs. Evolution
 - Listen to the exchanges, and you'll sense the mockery, the disdain, for Intelligent Design.
 - To believe in the Big Bang and evolution is intellectually lazy.

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- Alternative lifestyles are intellectually dishonest.
 - The bi-lingualization of America is intellectually dishonest.
 - Illegal immigration is intellectually dishonest.
Do the ends justify the means?

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- There's a great line in Matthew 22:46 after several more intellectual exchanges between Jesus and the Sadducees and Pharisees: *“And no man was able to answer him a word, neither durst any man from that day forth ask him any more questions.”* Jesus had silenced his mockers!

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- It's at this moment that Jesus warns the multitudes NOT to be like the Pharisees and the scribes. He exposes their religious pretentiousness.
 - If Jesus walked into our church today, would he see chief priests, scribes, Pharisees and Sadducees...or genuine people of faith, mercy and love? Have we allowed religion to replace relationship?


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- In Mark 2:6-7, some scribes were sitting, watching Jesus heal the paralyzed man. Their response? They accuse Jesus of blasphemies and say, “*who can forgive sins but God only?*”


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- In Mark 3:1-6, Jesus was about to heal a man on the sabbath...Jesus sensed the Pharisees' critical eyes, and *“looked about on them with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts.”*
 - He heals the man, and the Pharisees' response was to discuss how they might destroy Jesus.



Where do we go from here?

- Be very cautious and careful about mocking others. It is not the most constructive form of communication. In fact, it's very destructive.
- Mocking begins—or ends—in the home. What happens in those four walls comes out in public. Parents, don't create a mocking culture in your family!

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- Be realistic about your condition and the condition of mankind. Sometimes a mocking spirit comes from our expectations of perfection.
 - You aren't perfect, and no one else is perfect. When faced with mercy or judgement, what should you gravitate toward?

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- When mocked by others, ask God to guide your reaction—your thoughts, feelings, words and actions.
 - Don't be naïve: if you are growing in the Lord, you will be mocked. It will come with the territory. How you respond is crucial.



and whatever happens...

- Stay positive! Remember, for the Christian this life is the WORST it gets. For the unbeliever, this life is the BEST it gets! Keep your perspective!