



# FUN AND HOLINESS

Is laughter, enjoyment, and fun a distraction from our call to seek first His kingdom? Why do we as an organization value fun? As we grow in our understanding of the values of Reconciled World, let's take a moment to examine the idea of fun—a concept included in the RW value of Family.

## **Holiness**

We have no problem as pastors and leaders understanding that our faith should compel us to sacrifice and serve others—that we are to “deny ourselves and take up our cross to follow Jesus” (Matthew 16:24). We know the purpose of gathering together is to study God's word, pray, worship, and encourage one another towards good deeds (Acts 2:42, Heb. 10:24). In other words, the Christian life is about the pursuit of holiness. This should certainly be the focus of our life and faith. But what about fellowship? Sharing life together? Joy? Where do those words and ideas fit into our lives?

Is it honoring to God when we pursue holiness and still find space in our day to laugh? Is it ok to seek first the kingdom of God and still join together with other believers to enjoy fun activities and simple pleasures? We believe the answer is yes. (And we enjoy seeing you as the staff of RW joining together to live this out as well!)

## **Did Jesus have fun?**

It is an interesting question to contemplate. Since the Bible doesn't directly tell us if Jesus had fun, we have to use our imaginations, and there is certainly room to disagree. What do you think? In your mind, did Jesus have fun? Did He smile? Laugh? Enjoy the fellowship of His friends?

When I envision Jesus sitting with the children, I don't imagine a somber Jesus bouncing children on his knee. I think He smiled, laughed, and told stories. Otherwise—knowing how children are—they wouldn't have stayed around very long!

Why do you think Jesus was invited to the wedding party in Cana in John 2? Because of His miracles? (He hadn't performed any yet.) Because he was a celebrity? (He wasn't one yet) I think it's likely that Jesus was invited simply because He was a friend—someone the bride and groom enjoyed being around. There is no indication that Jesus attended the wedding to preach a sermon. It doesn't seem He went with the goal of performing miracles. He wasn't there to show off His power. So why did Jesus attend? Perhaps Jesus was invited to the wedding and chose to attend simply because He liked people and He enjoyed having fun.

## **Joy includes fun**

For clarity's sake, fun doesn't mean drunkenness, coarse joking, or promoting compromise. This is the behavior that Ephesians 5:4 warns against. But I think, in Christ, there is freedom to laugh, enjoy a game, and spend a fun evening together. Jesus calls us “dear children” and says we must become like little children to enter the kingdom of God (John 13:33, Matt 18:3). Do children spend time worrying about looking dignified and respectable? Not at all—they love to play and have fun. For us, fun is a small part of what it means to truly delight in the Lord.

I believe we can be people who pursue holiness and give everything to follow Christ, while receiving moments of joy and fun as a gift from God while doing it. Let's unpack this idea of fun a bit further. The devotional below will help us talk about fun in each of our cultures and help us learn about how we can continue to incorporate this value into our ministry and life.

*Devotional Study*

NOVEMBER

*Fun and Holiness*

**Read Zechariah 8:5 and Jeremiah 31:13**

- What do these verses describe as happening in God's perfect plan?

**Read Psalm 104:26**

- Why did God create the 'leviathan'?

- What does this verse tell us about God?

**Read Proverbs 17:22**

- How can joy and fun help to be restorative? What benefit can come to those who incorporate moments of fun into their lives?

Research has shown that having fun together has many benefits:

- Lessens our stress and improves health - it actually IS good medicine
- Creates emotional bonding
- Lessens defensive feelings
- Improves ability to engage with others
- Improves ability to focus on a task

It's easy to think it's a waste of time, or that it's not dignified for leaders to have fun, but let's look at what the Bible says.

**Read Ephesians 5:4**

- Does this verse say you should never joke or laugh or tell funny stories?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- What kind of talking and joking does this verse say is not appropriate?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- Why would the Bible warn against foolish talk, obscene, coarse joking? How is this different from the idea of fun promoted in the previous examples and verses we studied?

**Reflection**

Think for a moment about the culture you live in. Are Christian leaders and pastors encouraged to have fun? What is appropriate fun for church leaders in your culture?