



The Vanity of Foolish Laughter – Ecclesiastes 7:6

6 For as the crackling of thorns under a pot,
so is the laughter of the fools;
this also is vanity.

Laughter is enjoyable. People who laugh often tend to be healthier as a result. However, the laughter of a fool is another matter. A good hearty laugh is great. Laughter with friends (even with strangers) lightens the mood, opening the way for connection and relational development. Yet, again foolish laughter reveals no insight or connection, but rather a lack of understanding.

Have you ever told a joke or made a statement that got people laughing, but in the midst of the laughter noticed something different in one person's laughing? There might just be something about the way in which they laugh that is simply off. They are laughing along with others, but they don't seem to be in sync with anyone else. There seems to be a look in their eyes that reveals that at a foundational level they might not even understand what they are laughing about. They know it is supposed to be funny. Perhaps your delivery tipped them off, but if asked, they could not explain why.

When this happens with a child who is attempting to participate in the humor of their parents or other adults, that is natural, but when this takes place among peers something is not right. The fool laughs rather than working to understand. Staying at a surface level, the fool resists the hard work of asking questions and revealing what is not known by them. Yet, no one is fooled for long.

The fool in Proverbs is one who starts fights (Proverbs 18:6), is easily upset (Proverbs 12:16), believes everything he reads (Proverbs 14:15), loves to talk, but hates to listen (Proverbs 18:2), makes light of sin (Proverbs 10:23), despises their mother (Proverbs 15:20). The laughing fool in like manner fails to develop the character needed to mature. Admitting what you know as well as what you not know is critical to maturity. The person who does not know what they do not know is far harder to help than the person who in humility is willing to seek and ask others for insight and knowledge.

Thoughts for Reflection

How has admitting the limits of your understanding been freeing for you enabling the opportunity for increased learning?