

Curveball

George Bernard Shaw once said, “England and America are two countries separated by a common language.” An example from the world of sports demonstrates his point. As a lifelong baseball fan, I’m familiar with the term curveball. It’s a ball thrown by the pitcher in such a way that it changes direction, fooling the opponent. In cricket, the strategy is similar but the word is very different. The bowler (pitcher) tries to overcome the batsman by “bowling a googley” (pitching a curveball).

Though games and cultures differ, the concept of the curveball portrays a reality familiar in any language. Life is full of times when we are unsuspectingly “bowled a googley,” and we find ourselves overwhelmed. In those moments of fear and confusion, it’s comforting to know we have a God who is sufficient for any challenge. Trials are to be expected (1Peter 4:12). Yet we may well be shocked by the circumstances facing us. But God is never surprised! He permits our trials, and He can enable us to respond to them in a way that honors Him.

When we suffer, we must “commit [our] souls to Him in doing good,” wrote Peter (v.19). In God’s strength, we can face life’s most troublesome curveballs. Nothing surprises God. (Bill Crowder)

Changing the Nation’s Moral Compass

When Abraham Lincoln was introduced to author Harriet Beecher Stowe, he reportedly said that she was “the little woman who wrote the book that started this great war.” Although President Lincoln’s comment wasn’t entirely serious, Stowe’s novel Uncle Tom’s Cabin was instrumental in abolishing slavery in the US. Its graphic depiction of racism and the injustice of slavery helped lead to the start of civil war. Ultimately, Lincoln’s Emancipation Proclamation declared that all slaves “shall be free.” Thus, Stowe’s novel helped to change a nation’s moral compass.

Centuries earlier, King Solomon was told about what would change the moral compass of God’s people Israel. It was to start with humility and confession. The Lord told Solomon: “If My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land” (2Chron. 7:14).

As Christians, we should first take an inventory of our own personal lives. As we humbly seek God in prayer and repentance of sin, changes begin in our lives. God may then use us to change a nation’s moral compass. “Nothing is politically right which is morally wrong.” -- Lincoln (Dennis Fisher)

Light as a Feather

We Christians can sometimes be a joyless lot, preoccupied with maintaining our dignity. That’s an odd attitude, though, since we’re joined to a God who has given us His wonderful gift of joy and laughter. It’s okay to have fun! Each family expresses it in different ways, of course. I’m thankful that our house has been a house of laughter. Water fights, good-natured (albeit stiff) competition, gentle ribbing, and hilarity came easily to us. Laughter has been a gift of God’s goodness that carried us through some of life’s darkest days. The joy of the Lord has often been our refuge (Neh. 8:10).

When King David brought the ark of the covenant to Jerusalem from the house of Obed-Edom, he danced “with all his might” before the Lord (2Sam. 6:14). The Hebrew word has the idea of joyful exuberance and is akin to our expression “kick up your heels.” In fact, in verse 16 it says that David was “leaping and whirling.” Michal, David’s wife, felt that his antics were

unbecoming to the dignity of a king and reacted with stern severity. David's response was to announce that he would become even more "undignified" (v.22). His spirit was buoyant and he felt "as light as a feather." Take time to laugh! (Ecc. 3:4). Wholesome laughter has great face value. (David Roper)

Do I Have My Father's Eyes?

By Denise Campbell 6-6-05

From the time of one's birth,
A person is compared to some other
Whether their looks and actions
Resemble their father or mother.

Maybe they have their father's eyes
Or their mother's same gaze,
And sometimes the child inherits
An ancestor's looks or ways.

Being reborn into the family of God
And spending time with Him in prayer,
I should start resembling Him--
The same traits we should share.

Do I look more and more like Him
And follow His every way?
Can others tell by my actions
That I walk with Him each day?

Am I recognizable as God's child
And do I see in ways that are wise?
When compared to the world around me,
Do I have my Father's eyes?

A Moments Wisdom

It is not talking, but walking, that will bring us to heaven.

You Might Be A Preacher If...

You hesitate to tell people what you do for a living.
You've ever received an anonymous "U-Haul gift certificate.
You've ever waded into a creek wearing a necktie.
You find yourself counting people at the ball game.
You've ever spoken for free and were worth every penny of it.
You drive a car with over 100,000 miles on it.
Instead of getting 'ticked off' you get 'grieved in the spirit'.
You've ever stood by a grave as two 90 year old veterans attempt to fold the flag.
The New Testament really is Greek to you.
Cell phones go off while you're preaching.

Hymns: The Way We Would Sing Them If We Were Being Honest With Ourselves

I Surrender, Some
There Shall Be Sprinkles of Blessings
Oh, How I Like Jesus
I Love to Talk About Telling the Story
Take My Life and Let Me Be
It Is My Secret What God Can Do
There Is Scattered Cloudiness in My Soul Today
Where He Leads Me, I Will Consider Following
Just As I Pretend to Be
When the Saints Go Sneaking In
Sit Up, Sit Up for Jesus
A Comfy Mattress Is Our God
Self-Esteem to the World, The Lord Is Come
Amazing Grace, How Interesting the Sound
Go Tell It on the Speed Bump
Praise God From Whom All Affirmations Flow
My Hope Is Built on Nothing Much
When Peace, Like a Trickle
I'm Fairly Certain that My Redeemer Lives
What an Acquaintance We Have in Jesus
Blessed Hunch
Blest Be the Tie that Doesn't Cramp My Style
(Author Unknown)