# “Let Me Tell You About How I Know God Has a Sense of Humor”

**I was reading Sue Bohlin’s blog post Does God Has a Sense of Humor?, and I have something to add. My name, Talitha, is from Mark 5:41. It means “Little Girl.” My mother told me that when she was pregnant with me, God told her to name me Talitha. Oh, and the kicker? I’m five-foot, and 108 pounds, roughly. God DOES has a sense of humor!**

Love it! Thank you so much for sharing your story—and for making me smile!

Warmly,

Sue Bohlin

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# Does God Have a Sense of Humor?

Sure He does! Where else would we get ours, since we are made in His image, and a sense of humor is such a delightful gift?

Humor, though, is culturally rooted (with the exception of mother-in-law jokes, which are apparently universal in any culture on the planet!). That’s why most of us Westerners find it difficult to understand that Jesus was really a funny

fellow. For instance, it's easy for us to imagine Him intoning solemnly, "Blind guides! You strain out a gnat yet swallow a camel!" (Matt. 23:28) Not only is it a funny mental image, but Jesus was making a pun that is completely lost in translation. The Aramaic word for gnat is *galma*, and the word for camel is *gamla*. If we'd been there as onlookers, we would have howled.

So maybe some more modern examples, closer to home, will serve to show that our God has an absolutely delightful sense of humor.

My dear friend Holly told me this story:

> One time I was reading a story in which the author tells the reader that God delights in wooing us and that we can even ask Him to give us a love song. After all, Zephaniah 3:17 tells us that He will quiet us with His love and rejoice over us with singing. So why not ask Him for a love song?
>
> I was thinking about that one day while waiting for my lunch order. I was sitting outside a café in the beautiful sunshine, when two girls walked up to the outdoor picnic benches I was at, put down their purses and went inside to order their lunch.
>
> I smiled at them as they walked inside, and then went back to pondering what kind of love song God could possibly give me. Would He honor the request right away, if at all? Maybe He'd send a bird chirping a beautiful song. Maybe He'd just splash a beam of sun right across my lap. Maybe He'd . . . oh, never mind. It's just silly to think about these things.
>
> But . . . the author did say that God delighted to do these kinds of things.
>
> Well, here goes nothing.
>
> "God, would you send me a love song?" I squeaked out meekly.
>
> No sooner had the words left my lips when this girl's cell

> phone started ringing in her purse loud enough for me to hear the ring tone. Over and over again it just kept repeating this phrase from a song by The Doors: “Hello, I love you, won’t you tell me your name? Hello, I love you, won’t you tell me your name?” I laughed and laughed and laughed! That crazy God with a GREAT sense of humor and perfect timing!!

Holly’s friend Sheila read that story and responded with this:

> God is definitely funny. This morning I was praying that I wouldn’t step on the dead mouse in the attic today, and I “heard” the reply, “How about tomorrow?” I laughed out loud.”

I never thought of God as witty like that, but why not?

This is my all-time favorite, told to me by Angie herself:

> When she was mothering three young children, she was struggling with a number of severe stressors when she sensed God calling to her. Literally. In her spirit, she heard Him say her full name: “*Angela*.” Only her mother and God call her Angela. So she knew He wanted her to do something and whatever it was, she knew she didn’t want to do it.
>
> She heard, “*Angela*,” and she pretty much held up her hand to the Lord and said, “Talk to Moses.”
>
> Some time passed, and she heard His voice again: “*Angela*.” Again, she said, “Talk to Moses.”
>
> More time passed. And then one day she was cooking dinner, stirring the pasta into boiling water, when she distinctly heard His voice again: “Joshua 1:2.”
>
> Oh boy.
>
> She turned off the stove, told her son to watch his younger siblings, grabbed her Bible and went to her room to read,

“Moses My servant is dead. You, however, arise and go . . .”

Now that’s funny. I don’t care who you are!

This blog post originally appeared at blogs.bible.org/tapestry/sue_bohlin/does_god_have_a_sense_of_humor on September 9, 2012.

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# Confessions of a Cellphone-Challenged Journalist

I have a confession.

Not one of those tawdry confessions, but it is a little embarrassing. You see, I am cellphone challenged.

I used a cellphone once – about ten years ago when volunteering to help rebuild Miami after Hurricane Andrew. The BellSouth loaner, a real clunker, helped me navigate the storm-ravaged county amidst downed street signs and landmarks.

But I’ve never owned one. Voicemail takes my messages and I’ve seldom wanted to be more accessible. Some of my friends swear by cellphones. Others swear at them. Ever been in a movie theater when a filmgoer gets a call and decides to talk?

My wife attended a conference presentation during which a woman asked the speaker a question from the audience. In the middle of her question, with all eyes on her, her cellphone rang. She not only answered it, but also conducted a brief conversation while everyone watched aghast.

Airline travelers talk before takeoff until the flight

attendant tells them to stop. They resume talking when the plane lands. They talk walking through the airport, on the inter-terminal shuttle, entering the restroom. They talk while using the toilet or washing their hands. Some restrooms sound like offices.

Drivers talk. Beachgoers talk. Students talk between classes. Shoppers talk while cruising the aisles. ("What kind of cheese did you want me to get?")

Some restaurants ask diners not to use cellphones. Some summer camps have banned them because they distract kids from social and recreational activities.

My doctor's office has a sign asking patients to please not talk on cellphones while the doctor or nurse is examining them. (Let your mind wander on that theme for a moment.)

One of my favorite signs is inside a nearby church: "Please turn off cellphones during service. (Let God call you.)"

The hit movie, "Bruce Almighty," depicts God's attempts to contact the main character (played by Jim Carrey) by leaving a number on his pager. Turns out the number is valid in many area codes. After the film's release, people and businesses began getting calls from folks asking for God.

A Florida woman threatened to sue the film studio after 20 calls per hour clogged her cellphone. A Denver radio station built a contest around the fluke. Some callers to the station seemed to think they'd really discovered a direct line to God. One left a message confessing her adultery.

Another number holder decided to offer some friendly advice. She changed her voice message to say, "Looking for God? Well, I'm not Him, but I do know Him. And knowing Him has changed my life. You can know Him too. In fact, it's a local call."

Come to think of it, that may not be a bad idea. Jeremiah (the

Jewish prophet, not the bullfrog) said God told him, “Call to Me and I will answer you, and I will tell you great and mighty things, which you do not know.” It doesn’t even require a cellphone.

I guess I can live with cellphones if people can realize that they’re not for everyone. If you have one, I certainly don’t fault you. But please, do turn it off when you go to see the doctor.

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# Romantic Hyperbole: A Humorous Look at Honesty in Love

It seemed like a good idea at the time.

It would be a great way to express my enduring affection for my wife. I would find seven romantic birthday cards and give one to Meg each day for a week, starting on her birthday. It would continue a sweet tradition begun before we married.

Each card would have a simple picture that would tenderly convey our feelings for one another. Inside would be an endearing slogan or affirmation to which I would add a personal expression of my love for her.

I didn’t foresee that Day Three would bring an ethical dilemma.

I carefully selected the cards and arranged them in an appropriate sequence. Day One showed a cute puppy with a pink rose. Inside: “You’re the one I love.”

Day Two featured a picture of a little boy and girl in a meadow with their arms over each other's shoulders. The slogan: "Happy Birthday to my favorite playmate."

Day Three depicted a beautiful tropical sunset: bluish pink sky, vast ocean, silhouetted palm trees. You could almost feel the balmy breeze. Inside: "Paradise is anywhere with you", to which I added personal mention of places holding special memories for us: an island vacation spot, a North Carolina hotel, our home.

I completed the remaining cards, dated the envelopes, and planned to bestow one card each morning of her birth week. Then reality happened.

You see, I had agreed to go camping with her for Days One and Two. Camping is something Meg thrives on—outdoor living, clean air, hiking, camp fires. It's in her blood. Camping is something I did in Boy Scouts—dust, mosquitoes, noisy campers, smelly latrines. It ranks just below root canals on my list of favorites.

We camped at a state park only fifteen minutes from our home. On her birthday morning, she liked the fluffy puppy. Day Two, the cute kids made her smile. So far, so good.

Meanwhile, I was tolerating camping, doing my best to keep my attitude positive. The food was OK; the bugs were scarce. After two days, I was ready to go home as planned. Meg wanted to stay an extra day. We each got our wish.

Once home and alone, I pulled out Meg's card for "Day Three," the one with the tropical sunset and the "paradise is anywhere with you" slogan.

Should I give her the card? I had chosen to leave the campground. "But," I reasoned with myself, "the slogan was true lots of the time."

I settled on a compromise, a post-it note on the envelope explaining, “You may find that this card contains just a bit of romantic hyperbole.”

Might giving it a clever-sounding label defuse my hypocrisy?

The echoes of her laughter still reverberate through our home. I got off easy.

“Speak the truth to each other,” wrote a Jewish sage. “Speak. . . the truth in love,” advocated a first-century biblical writer. Wise advice for just about any relationship.

“Romantic hyperbole” has become a humorous gauge of truthfulness in our relationship, a test for honesty. Neither of us enjoys every location on earth. She feels some sporting events are a waste of time. I can get bored at shopping malls. But as long as we are honest with each other about our feelings, the bond seems to grow stronger.

That’s no hyperbole.

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