

WISDOM UNIVERSITY

PROVERBS 1:20-33

# WHO WILL HAVE THE LAST LAUGH?



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**FIRST BYRON CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH**

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# INTRODUCTION

## Problem

Laughter at Christ's truth, Christ's people, and Christ's morals is common, contagious, and catastrophic.

## Effects

Such laughter can take the following forms:

- **Public laughing:** in the workplace, yard, classroom.
- **Private laughing:** secretly mocking God's Word or God's providences
- **Practical laughing:** we may not laugh out loud at God but porning or partying is effectively laughing at God.

## Solution?

All such laughter is a serious problem, but there is a way to good laughs, laughs that last. We are going to look at how Solomon guides us to good laughs and laughs that last in Proverbs 1:20-33.

HAPPINESS IS NEITHER WITHOUT US  
NOR WITHIN US. IT IS IN GOD, BOTH  
WITHOUT US AND WITHIN US.  
BLAISE PASCAL

## CONTEXT

### Chapter One

In verses 8-19 we eavesdropped on the verbal battle between peers and parents. Peers were trying to pull the person one way, and parents the other.

In verses 20-33 It would appear that the young person has followed their peers' voices and is now further down the road to disaster.

While we don't hear the peers or parents voices now, we hear another voice, the voice of Wisdom. Wisdom leaves the house and chases him into the streets of the city. Wisdom appeals to him with a number of arguments and assertions.

### Who is Wisdom?

"Wisdom" is plural here. It's literally "Wisdoms" (Eph. 3:10). It suggests a fullness of wisdom, all wisdom dwells in her. That's a clue to her identity.

Remember Colossians 2:3 says that in Christ "are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." The New Testament identifies wisdom with Christ in a number of other places (Luke 7:35; 11:49; Luke 11:31; 1 Cor. 1:24).

"Wisdom" is a feminine noun in Hebrew, which explains Wisdom being portrayed as a woman, but that shouldn't make us hesitate about identifying Wisdom with the Son of God. In other places, Jesus compares himself to a mother hen (Matt. 23:37).



We've identified Wisdom as the pre-incarnate Son of God. What does he say?



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# 1. LAUGHING AT GOD IS A SERIOUS MATTER (20-22)

## Christ warns scoffers

*(20) Wisdom calls aloud outside; she raises her voice in the open squares. (21) She cries out in the chief concourses, at the openings of the gates in the city she speaks her words.*

**A Powerful Voice:** Wisdom is calling “aloud...she raises her voice...she cries out.” This is the sound of urgency and importance. She’s not whispering, nor even talking in a normal voice. This is ear-splitting and ear-piercing. She wants you to hear and wants to make sure you hear.

**A Public Voice:** Wisdom is “outside...in the open squares...in the chief concourses...at the openings of the city gates.” She’s calling in the most public places. She is bold, brave, and unashamed. She doesn’t care what people think about her lack of decorum. There’s something far more important to her—souls of foolish dying people. She goes after people in everyday working life, not just on Sundays.

**A Pleading Voice:** Wisdom calls with concern and compassion. She uses the light of nature, the faculty of reason, conscience, government, church, providence, and especially the reading and preaching of the Word to plead with all who will hear.

## Scoffers delight in scorning

*(22) “How long, you simple ones, will you love simplicity? For scorners delight in their scorning, and fools hate knowledge.*

Who is Wisdom calling out to? Who is she pleading with? There are three groups, which we’ve come across already in Proverbs 1: the simple (naïve, gullible), scorners (defiant and cynical), fools (moral folly more than intellectual folly). They not only are these things, they are passionate about these things. They love naiveté, they love scorning, and they hate knowledge.

“How long?” expresses her strong desire for them to change. “Will you go another day? Is this worth another second? Don’t you see this is an emergency? “Leave Folly College and enroll in Wisdom University. Leave the gullible, the cynical, and the moral fools, and join the wise. Leave the classes of naïveté, cynicism, and folly, and attend the classes of practical wisdom, correction, discernment, judicial insight.”

## APPLICATION



Have you ever laughed at God? Are you laughing at God right now? Are you laughing publicly, privately, or practically? Do you see how serious this is? And yet, God is still calling you and pleading with you. He has compassion even for those who have no time for him.



If you used to be like this, thank God that he not only called you but gave you ears to hear. How amazing that he has turned you from being gullible, cynical, or immoral to being wise, believing and moral. This is all of God's grace. You could easily still be a scoffer like Richard Dawkins or Lady Gaga.

WHEN YOU ARE LAUGHING AT GOD,  
GOD IS FROWNING AT YOU



Laughing at God is a very serious matter.  
But do you know what's even more serious? Having God laugh at you.



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## 2. GOD'S LAUGHING AT YOU IS EVEN MORE SERIOUS (24-32)

Christ was ignored in good times (24-25, 29-32)

*(24) Because I have called and you refused, I have stretched out my hand and no one regarded, (25) Because you disdained all my counsel, and would have none of my rebuke... (29) Because they hated knowledge and did not choose the fear of the Lord, (30) They would have none of my counsel and despised my every rebuke. (31) Therefore they shall eat the fruit of their own way, and be filled to the full with their own fancies. (32) For the turning away of the simple will slay them, and the complacency of fools will destroy them.*

Wisdom reflects back on past attempts to reach out. Her experience was very similar to the prophets (Isa. 50:2; 66:4). Through them, God called, stretched out his hand, counseled, and corrected, and the reaction was exactly the same: people refused, rejected, laughed, hated, spurned, and turned away. Things were going so well in their lives, that they just laughed at Wisdom, they made a joke of it, and treated it lightly. But times are about to change, and so is their reaction. See Matthew 23:37-38 for a parallel passage.

Christ will laugh at your serious times (26-28)

*(26) I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your terror comes (27) When your terror comes like a storm, and your destruction comes like a whirlwind, when distress and anguish come upon you. (28) Then they will call on me, but I will not answer; They will seek me diligently, but they will not find me.*

Wisdom looks ahead to when the good times are over. It's a time of calamity, disaster, terror, storm, destruction, whirlwind, distress, and anguish. When is this time? It's speaking of the experience of unbelievers after death, when they face God, his judgment, and his eternal sentence. We know this from the terms used to describe how bad these times will be, and also from God's response. He views unbelievers in their terrible distress and says, "I will laugh at you, I will mock you, I will not answer you, I will be unavailable."

Years and years of compassion and care, pity and promises, appeals and arguments. But there's a time coming when that's going to stop. If you don't respond to his constant calls, ultimately he will not respond to yours. If you didn't want him on earth, he will not want you in heaven (Luke 13:24-28). People will get what they want because God will give them over to what they want (Rom. 1:24, 26, 28). As C. S. Lewis warned, we will either say to God, "Thy will be done," or God will say to us, "Thy will be done."

But, what does God's laughing mean? We find this in other places too (Ps. 2:4; 37:13; 52:6). Let's first of all say what it does not mean. It does not mean that God delights in people's destruction. He does not find that funny. It does not make him happy. He has no pleasure in the death of the wicked (Ezek. 33:11).

Second, let's look at what it does mean. The wider context of the passage is that people will get what they gave. What they did to God will be done to them. What people sow, they will reap (Gal. 6:7-8). It's retributive justice – eye for an eye, tooth for a tooth, laugh for a laugh. They will get what they deserve.



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There's also the truth that God is pleased when his justice is satisfied, God is pleased when he's victorious over rebels, God is pleased when scorning and sinning is stopped.

Most people do not laugh at God in the hospital, on a bumpy flight, in court, in war. There's one place where no one will laugh at God - the judgment seat on the last day. You may laugh long, but he laughs last.

## APPLICATION



Are times good? Are you tempted to ignore God and live by your own wisdom? Are you characterized by rejection, refusal, scorn, and turning away from God? Take Wisdom's hand and let her lead you down the road of time to the end of your life and ask yourself, "Is it worth it?" You may laugh at God throughout your life, but if you do, one day you will have laughed your last laugh and you will never laugh again.



How compassionate Wisdom is in calling us away from folly and showing us the way to be wise. How thankful we should be if God has stopped us laughing at himself and given us joy in himself. We have a prospect of even greater happiness at the end when the Lord will say to us "Enter into the joy of the Lord" (Matt. 25:21).

DON'T LAUGH AT GOD IN GOOD TIMES OR  
GOD WILL LAUGH AT YOU AT THE WORST TIME



Has that sobered you up? Are you wondering if you can ever laugh again?  
God can make you laugh in serious times.



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## 3. GOD CAN MAKE YOU LAUGH IN SERIOUS TIMES (23, 33)

### Serious times can be filled with the Holy Spirit

***(23) Turn at my rebuke; surely I will pour out my spirit on you, I will make my words known to you.***

"Turn at my rebuke" assumes this person is living the wrong way, heading in the wrong direction, and going to the wrong place. Wisdom is rebuking him. This is serious stuff. However, it's not just rebuke, there's also a command, "Turn." The rebuke is with a view to the person turning 180 degrees and going the other way. There's also a promise attached to the command, "I will pour out my spirit on you."

The NIV has "heart" (instead of "Spirit"). God is waiting and willing to pour out his love, show his love to the person who turns. And that love is expressed in God's making his words known to him. If the translation "Spirit" is correct, it's saying that God will accompany his life-giving Word with his life-giving Spirit, both of which are an expression of love.

### Serious times can be filled with security

***(33) But whoever listens to me will dwell safely, and will be secure, without fear of evil.***

And here's a second promise to encourage us to turn and listen. Listening not only brings God's love into our lives, but also his peace, a peace that is rooted in true security and results in deep confidence, a peace in trouble, a peace that the world cannot take away, a peace that endures. With this peace, we need fear no evil as none of the threats mentioned here will come upon us.

## APPLICATION

♥ Despite years of laughing at God he still holds out the promise of the Gospel to us. Despite God being hated, he's ready to love. Despite God being rejected, he's ready to accept. Despite having his words ignored, he's ready to speak them again. Despite being laughed at, he's ready to love. See John 7:31-39 for an echo of this passage.

♥ Wisdom is a matter of life or death not ten tips for a better life. If we embrace it we can be filled with the Spirit, be overwhelmed with God's love, and enjoy eternal security, and everlasting laughter,

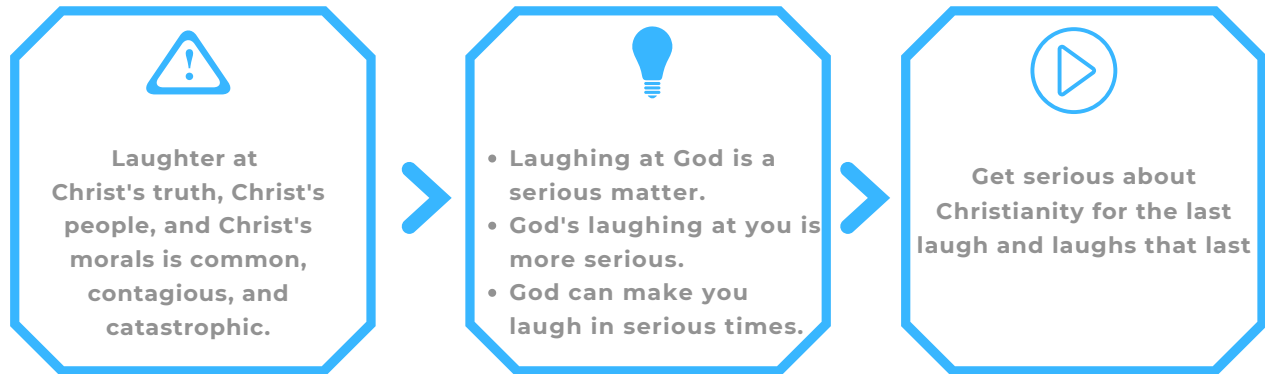
LAUGHING AT GOD MAY FEEL GOOD,  
BUT LISTENING TO GOD DOES GOOD



Let's sum up this theology of laughter.



# CONCLUSION



## FURTHER STUDY

### Online Articles

- [Holy vs Unholy Laughter](#) by Aaron Denlinger.
- [Enjoy a Good Laugh](#) by Jon Bloom
- [Why a High View of God Should Lead to Laughter](#) by David Prince
- [God Laughs out Loud to Quiet our Fears](#) by David Mathis

### Books

- [Answering the New Atheism](#) by Scott Hahn
- [Atheism Remix: A Christian Confronts the New Atheists](#) by Al Mohler
- [Heaven and Hell](#) by Edward Donnelly

### Discussion Questions

- What are some ways people laugh at God?
- What biblical truths and ethics do people laugh at?
- What does this passage tell you about Christ?
- How can we be more like Lady Wisdom in our evangelism?
- What other verses in the Bible can you find that speak of laughter and what do they teach you?
- How would you defend God's character from the charge that he is being cruel in these verses?
- What are some of the ways that God has rebuked and corrected you?
- How has God made you laugh in serious times?

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PROVERBS 1:20-33

# WHO WILL HAVE THE LAST LAUGH?

HAPPINESS IS NEITHER WITHOUT US NOR WITHIN US. IT IS IN GOD, BOTH WITHOUT US AND WITHIN US.  
BLAISE PASCAL



Laughing at God is common, contagious, and catastrophic

- Public laughing
- Private laughing
- Practical laughing

**Biblical answer?**



Laughing at God is a serious matter

- Christ warns scoffers
- Scoffers delight in scorning

WHEN YOU ARE LAUGHING AT GOD, GOD IS FROWNING AT YOU.

**What's even more serious?**



Get serious about Christianity for the last laugh and laughs that last

ENTER INTO THE JOY OF YOUR LORD.  
MATTHEW 25:21



God can make you laugh in serious times

- Filled with the Holy Spirit
- Filled with security

LAUGHING AT GOD MAY FEEL GOOD, BUT LISTENING TO GOD DOES GOOD

**Action?**



God's laughing at you is more serious

- Christ was ignored in good times
- Christ will laugh at serious time

DON'T LAUGH AT GOD IN GOOD TIMES, OR GOD WILL LAUGH AT YOU AT THE WORST TIME

**Is there any hope of laughter?**

