

# **I Can Laugh About It Now**

*-Jeff Allen*

There is a story going around that when you die and go to heaven, you will stand before God and he will ask you one question, "While you were on earth, did you get the joke?" I used to hear that in AA meetings and everyone would laugh, including me, but the truth is – I didn't get the joke.

When it came to God and the rest of life, nothing was very funny to me. To a person who makes his living as a standup comedian, that is not a very good prognosis for success. I have been very fortunate to do as well as I have in the entertainment business, considering the last ten years have been a time in my life spent in confusion, fear and incredible self loathing – searching for some kind of meaning to what I felt was a wasted life. I can now look back and not only get the joke, but understand why God would ask the question. The joke is on all who think they can figure out the answers to the enigmas of life here on earth. God's greatest practical joke was giving man the illusion that he can figure it out. The beauty of this joke is that the answer has been under our noses for thousands of years and we refuse to look in the most obvious and simplest place –the Holy Bible. God's plan is a wonderment of paradoxes; strength comes from surrendering, wisdom comes out of the admission of ignorance and salvation comes from death.

Please understand that I can truly laugh about the futility of my journey now. As Don Quixote chased imaginary windmills, I chased after an illusion that somehow I could make sense out of my life without God. When I became a Christian, it was as if a light was turned on in my head and the shadows of my mind were illuminated for the first time. I use the word shadows because through books and psychologists, I was under the impression that I was being enlightened. I got close to what I thought were answers, only to have them leave as they came to be replaced by more doubt and confusion – followed by extreme frustration and depression. I believe God allows man to get enough of a glimpse to think he is close, but there will always be that hint of doubt.

Man can go so far on his own, but there will always be those shadows until he makes that leap of faith and says I can no longer do it on my own. I also don't believe there are the words to describe what it feels like to finally have the light go on in my head and to see my whole past laid out in front of me, where every piece of the puzzle fits. I can tell you – I never knew such joy.

Every trial, bump and glitch was for a reason and every reason sent me on a different part of the journey. Psychology, philosophy and man's religion - eastern and western - all pieces to a puzzle and all eventually led me to Christ. There is a freedom in knowing that the answer to life is, there is no definitive answer and that is the way it is supposed to be. The Bible provides me with the security of a blueprint for living - it is up to me to live it. My confusion has now been replaced by clarity. The crippling fear has been replaced with hope. And the self-loathing has been replaced with joy. Clarity, hope and joy-I ask for nothing more.

There is an indescribable freedom in knowing that I will never fully understand the purpose of my life here on earth. This is not to say that I do not get confused or afraid or have days where I don't like myself, but these emotions are tied to the earth. Like the confusion one feels in not being able to find their car keys, or the fear that comes from being in a dark alley at two in the morning, or the lack of esteem one feels when committing a sin and knowing full well it was wrong. This kind of understanding, which to intellectuals of this world may sound a tad simplistic, has freed my mind to do the one thing God intended us to do when he created man: worship him and enjoy what little time we have on this earth. Simple and cliché, just how it is supposed to be.

This is not to say that my life is without its problems or suffering. Contrary to popular belief, Christianity does not promise a painless life, only eternal life. The earthly wreckage that I carried from my past into my Christian life did not go away the minute I became a Christian. But that feeling of total helplessness did. If today I am in a position to enjoy the gifts that God has given me without suffering, then it would be wise for me to enjoy them while I can, because tomorrow will be another day. There are no guarantees that tomorrow will be without pain.

As I begin to clear the debris of a lifetime of misinformation, I can go to bed tonight with a smile on my face—knowing that I have been part of the joke.

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