

In Other Words...

A RESEARCH SERVICE OF FACTS & HUMOR FOR CHRISTIAN LEADERS

June 2025

AUTONOMY: In 1804, Napoleon Bonaparte crowned himself as emperor of France. He dressed in opulent robes and then, at the appointed time, held the crown over his head and lowered it into place. All those who gathered, including the pope, were mere spectators as the French leader made it clear he would not be controlled by any power other than himself. Our human nature desires the same thing, but such thinking inevitably leads to our own Waterloo. Better to die to self than to crown one's self. *The Practice of the Presence of Jesus, Joni Eareckson Tada, 2023, p.9*

BIBLE: Martyn Lloyd-Jones challenged people with this question: "Have you realized that most of your unhappiness in life is due to the fact that you are listening to yourself instead of talking to yourself?" Scripture should be the newsfeed that speaks truth to our soul and drowns out the distracting, destructive noise. *The Message of the Old Testament, Mark Dever, 2006, p.840*

EFFORT: Prior to the 2025 Memorial Tournament, Jack Nicklaus held his annual press conference on May 27th, which is a highlight each year on the PGA Tour. Like always, the 85-year-old Golden Bear was generous with his time as he answered questions and referenced great stories. When asked about preparation, the 18-time major winner recalled the PGA Championship at Oklahoma City in 1988. He showed up ready to win, but hadn't adequately prepared. He shocked everyone by missing the cut. The next morning, his wife Barbara put a sippy cup with orange juice on the table for breakfast. The accompanying note read, "There is no excuse for not being properly prepared." Nicklaus still has that little sippy cup as a reminder that it's childish to show up unprepared. Hopefully we can all benefit from his lesson. *USA Today, 5/29/25, p.C2*

FATHERHOOD: Legendary college football coach Bobby Bowden died in 2021 at the age of 91. He was forthright about his faith in Christ and used his folksy communication style to parlay truth. Bowden didn't hide his flaws and regularly told his kids, "There's only one person who's ever been perfect on this earth, and He ain't your daddy." We'll never get it all right as dads, but we can point our children to the One who never gets it wrong. *World, 1/15/22, p.104*

FATHERHOOD: H. Jackson Brown said, "I read years ago that it was not the responsibility of parents to pave the road for their children but to provide a road map, and I wanted to provide him (my son) with what I had learned about living a happy and rewarding life." As Adam prepared to leave for college, Brown jotted down thoughts that would ultimately become a three-volume instruction book for life, and a New York Times bestseller. Among the many insights, Brown wrote, "Live so that when your children think of fairness, caring, and integrity, they think of you." It's a goal for every parent to pursue. *Life's Little Instruction Book, Jackson Brown, 1991, p.2*

INVESTING: On May 22, 2010, software developer Laszlo Hanyecz paid for two Papa John's pizzas to be delivered to his Florida home and covered the \$41 bill with 10,000 bitcoin. That transaction is recognized as the first known purchase of goods with cryptocurrency and is marked each May 22nd as Bitcoin Pizza Day. For the 15th anniversary of that pizza purchase (2025), those bitcoin would be worth \$1.1 billion. Everybody has a story about missing an investment opportunity...just make sure yours isn't about eternal rewards. *Houston Chronicle, 5/23/25, p.B12*

MARRIAGE: Sandra Davis is London's top divorce lawyer, handling clients such as Princess Diana and plenty of billionaires. Her standard advice after 40 years of practice: Avoid it if you possibly can. She explained, "Never underestimate what it will involve. A divorce is like a train wreck; it upends all relationships, not just the one with the spouse." Her words, "it's not easy," apply to divorce and marriage so choose wisely where your efforts will go. *The Week*, 2/7/25, p.10

PRIORITIES: Professional videographer, Ivan McGuire, fell to his death on April 2, 1988 when he exited an airplane without his parachute. He had more than 800 jumps and aspired to be the best sky-diving photographer in the country. On that fateful day, McGuire was on his third jump and had readied himself to video another jumper. Before the advent of GoPro cameras, videography required a whole bag of equipment that could easily be misconstrued as a parachute. McGuire jumped ahead of the others and began to film, but when it was time to open his shoot, his hand can be seen reaching for what he realized was not there...the ripcord. The remaining footage revealed his rapid descent to earth at 150 mph. Our lives may not end with such obviously misplaced priorities so pay close attention to what you deem essential. *UPI.com*, 4/4/1988

RELATIONSHIPS: During a string of interviews, podcasts, and public appearances this spring, Mark Zuckerberg has asserted that "the average person wants to have more friends and connections with other people than they currently do – and that AI friends are a solution." He claimed that people have fewer than 3 friends and they need more like 15, so chatbots can close the gap. Human flourishing depends on authentic relationships, not artificial ones. *Wall Street Journal*, 5/8/25

TALENT: David Blaine is a famed magician who presses the boundaries of human endurance. He has encased himself in ice for 63 hours, held his breath under water for over 17 minutes, kissed a cobra, and opens his Las Vegas show by putting out a fire with the gallon of water he drank in front of the amazed crowd. And he added to the flames by spewing out the kerosene he drank after the pitchers of water. It's no wonder that his National Geographic television series is titled, "David Blaine Do Not Attempt." When asked in a recent interview if there's anything he can't do, Blaine replied, "I'm terrible at anything else." He's great as a professional magician, but little else. None of us are good at everything so focus on that which you excel. *Wall Street Journal*, 5/17/25, p.C14

EVERYDAY HUMOR

AUTHENTICITY: In January of 2025, Sylvester Franklin ordered a power drill online from China's AliExpress. In exchange for his \$40...he got a color picture of the drill rather than the tool. The Georgia man told reporters, "This is not good. This is real bad." *The Week*, 2/7/25, p.6

COMMUNICATION: Husbands are the best people to share secrets with. They'll never tell anyone because they aren't even listening. *This Is Me & This Is My Life*, Leslie Clayton

MARRIAGE: *Dennis the Menace* was confused when he saw his mom sitting on the couch watching football with his dad. Mrs. Mitchell acknowledged it wasn't her preference but sharing time together was more important. Mr. Mitchell then confessed that he'd sit through a love story if that's what it took to be with his wife. Dennis said, "That's weird" and concluded, "I guess bein' married means doin' stuff ya don't wanna do." *Houston Chronicle*, 11/26/23, p.U4

TECHNOLOGY: Just before Christmas in 2024, a woman in Chongqing, China won \$1,400 for her first-place finish in a unique competition. Participants were required to stay away from their smartphones for 8 hours without using movies or books to distract them...and they had to do so without showing "signs of anxiety." How she survived is a mystery. *The Week*, 12/20/24, p.6

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