

# In Other Words...

A RESEARCH SERVICE OF FACTS & HUMOR FOR CHRISTIAN LEADERS

January 2025

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**AMBITION:** In 2023, a Montana 5th-grader applied for the vacant principal position at her school. Ruth Rossmiller said, “The impossible is possible if you just try for it.” The school gave Ruth a full interview and then hired an experienced educator. Sometimes the idea of dreaming is exaggerated beyond reality. The impossible requires more than ambition. *The Week*, 5/5/2023, p.6

**CHURCH:** In 2019, Barna research found that 44% of American Christians say attending church is not an essential part of their faith. Tragically, that became even more obvious with the COVID pandemic. The local church, with all of its flaws, is an essential component of Christianity. So as my son-in-law Ben Lacey says, “Get into a church that gets into the Word.” *World*, 12/28/19, p.13

**EFFORT:** Anthropologist Carlos Castaneda (1925-1998) stated, “We either make ourselves miserable or we make ourselves strong. That amount of work is the same.” *GoodReads.com*

**GOALS:** James Clear has stated, “You do not rise to the level of your goals. You fall to the level of your systems.” Goals are the destination we desire and systems are the pathways that get us there, so create good systems to reach your goals. *Atomic Habits*, James Clear, 2018, p.27

**LIFE:** What secular culture sees as a mass of tissue that can be aborted with trivial justification is infinitely more than we can imagine. Human life begins with one cell that grows to 5,000 times its size in just 9 months and exponentially multiplies to 37 trillion cells with each cell being made up of one hundred trillion atoms. To say that we are fearfully and wonderfully made is truly an understatement. *A Million Little Miracles*, Mark Batterson, 2024, p.77

**PERSPECTIVE:** Marv Levy (age 99) coached the Buffalo Bills to 4 consecutive Super Bowl losses (1990-1993). It’s a record that’ll never be matched or broken, yet he maintained a great perspective. After repeatedly standing on the losing sideline of several Super Bowls and preparing for yet another, a reporter asked if this was a “must-win game.” Levy replied, “No. World War II was a must-win.” Those losses didn’t keep him from being inducted into the Pro Football Hall of Fame in 2001 during his first year of eligibility. In his induction speech he recalled an awkward but special conversation with his father while enrolled at Harvard Law School. He’d served in the Army during WWII, enlisting the day after high school graduation, and then later completed an undergraduate degree in Iowa where he played football at Coe College. He realized he didn’t want to be an attorney so he called his dad to explain that he wanted to be a football coach. Levy said, “Thirty seconds of painful silence followed, and then the old Marine said simply, ‘Be a good one.’” Know what the must-wins are and then do your best to win them. *USA Today*, 7/3/2018, p.6C

**PRIORITIES:** The most prestigious award in college football is the Heisman Trophy, named after the innovative coach John Heisman (1869-1936). At the start of each season Heisman would hold up the pigskin and tell his players, “Better to have died a small boy than to fumble this football.” Not true, but reflective of how priorities should be serious. *Wall Street Journal*, 12/14/24, p.C12

**PROGRESS:** “Inchstones” are a new concept in parenting. Milestones are the big markers and a new generation of parents is highlighting smaller achievements like half birthdays, a lost tooth, or putting on shoes for the first time. Celebrations of smaller events remind us that progress doesn’t have to be monumental. A new, good habit might start with an inchstone. *Huffpost.com*, 2/7/24

**RELATIONSHIPS:** The Bee Gees were one of the most successful groups of the 1970s with their tight harmony, energetic songs, and trademark falsetto voices. You don't have to be from that era to recall one of their biggest hits, *Staying Alive*. The famed trio was comprised of three brothers and Barry Gibb is the lone survivor. Maurice & Robin died in 2003 and 2012 respectively. They started harmonizing when they were children and could churn out songs almost spontaneously. As fame & money skyrocketed, their egos did the same. Sibling rivalry created tension, destructive choices, and a falling out. In a 2021 interview, Barry stated, "Looking back, what I regret most is that I fell out with my brothers." Life's biggest regrets are usually relational because nothing compares to the value of family & friends. *Saturday Evening Post, January/February 2021, p.25*

**REMOARSE:** Pete Rose died September 30, 2023 at the age of 83. His record for 4,256 base hits in MLB will probably stand for all time. He was a first-ballot shoe-in for the Hall of Fame before being permanently banned from baseball for betting on the game. In his autobiography, he made a profound theological statement about his crime: "I'm sure that I'm supposed to act all sorry or sad or guilty now that I've accepted that I've done something wrong. But you see, I'm just not built that way." Even though human nature tends to discount sin, Proverbs 28:13 reminds us that mercy comes to those who renounce their sin. *My Prison Without Bars, Pete Rose, 2004, p.320*

**SPIRITUAL WARFARE:** Most people tend to think spiritual warfare is out there somewhere, but doubt it's nearby. The world of online commerce might help us gain a clearer perspective. C.J. Moses is Amazon's Chief Information Security Officer. In a November 2024 interview, he noted that Amazon is now seeing an average of 750 million attempted hacks per day – that's up from 100 million per day just six months earlier. Criminals have embraced AI so the threat will only escalate from here. If one company experiences over 5 billion attacks per week in the physical world, we can safely expect even more in the spiritual realm. *Wall Street Journal, 11/25/24, p.B4*

**URGENCY:** Exactly one year before his assassination, Martin Luther King delivered a speech on April 4, 1967 at Riverside Church in New York City titled *Beyond Vietnam: A Time To Break Silence*. As he moved toward his conclusion, King declared, "We are now faced with the fact, my friends, that tomorrow is today. We are confronted with the fierce urgency of now. In this unfolding conundrum of life and history, there is such a thing as being too late." In our extreme busyness we must carefully discern what must be done now without delay. *AmericanRhetoric.com*

## EVERYDAY HUMOR

**DIET:** Helen talking about her husband's new diet: "He wants to make cauliflower crust pizza, so now I have to run to the grocery store and find a new husband." *Reader's Digest, July 2021, p.19*

**FOOD:** While going through the cafeteria line for breakfast, Betty Rosian saw a woman reach for carrot cake and then say, "No, it's too early for vegetables." *Reader's Digest, November 2024 p.18*

**FUTURE:** A long-haired man stood at an intersection with a sign declaring: NO END IN SIGHT SORRY. Sometimes the future seems worse than no future. *Wall Street Journal, 12/10/24, p.A18*

**HEALTH:** "If I eat healthy today, then I can have one piece of candy as a reward. If I eat unhealthy, I can have the whole bag." *Reader's Digest, April 2021, p.87*

**PREDICTIONS:** The BBC issued an apology on October 10, 2024 after a computer glitch caused their weather forecast in London to predict winds of 13,000 mph and overnight temperatures of 759 degrees Fahrenheit. Some predictions are better left unpredicted. *Examiner, 11/14/24, p.21B*

**WEIGHT:** Growth spurts tend to go from vertical to horizontal. *Houston Chronicle, 2/23/16, p.E4*

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