

Just Keeping it Real

Three mounds of pizza were piled high; first round draft picks from the buffet. We waited on Tony to pluck himself a salad and we said the blessing. The waitress slid to a stop and flung three straws onto the table.

"Coke," Tony grunted anticipating her question.

"Sweet tea," Heath chimed in.

With a startled look on my face, I gasp, "Did you just call her sweetie?"

Not so much as a smile erupted from anyone. It was not the first time I'd used that joke. Nevertheless, I was pleased with myself. I always loved to see the look on Heath's face as he tried to think of a way to disown me as his brother.

Through the lettuce crunching and dough smacking a few idle comments were cast about in hopes that one of us would hook into something worth talking about. It was always risky business; Heath could jump up at any time and methodically start detailing his ceramic tiling techniques.

I was determined not to let that happen, so I frantically searched my mind. Then I remembered that during my shower that morning God had revealed to me the meaning of life. BooYah! No grout today little brother!

Oh boy! Without further delay, I cranked down on it starting in Genesis. I hardly even noticed the "here we go again" looks I was getting from my crew, or how the people in the booth next to us were looking for an emergency exit. The fact that my audience was slipping back and forth to the buffet during most of it didn't even faze me. I'm telling you I was locked in. Where were the news cameras when you really need them?

Thirty-five or forty minutes past, who's counting? I had laid the foundation. The framework was firmly in place. The time had come to reveal the most sought after revelation of all times!

I paused ever so briefly for effect, and a much-needed breath, when in a flash, Heath jumped up, looked at his watch and said, "But anyway..." Threw down a tip and headed to the cash register with Tony hot on his heels.

Believe it or not, God had indeed revealed great things to me that morning, but I have since learned it's not so much what you blab, it's what they'll grab. For example, you may sound awful smart giving your riveting explanation on the complexities of the Holy Trinity while saying grace, but you won't be invited back to many dinners. Tony and Heath might bear it, but it's doubtful your unbelieving buddies will have the grout to stick it out. My great wisdom and church lingo will carry about as much weight with them as the guy who barks for the yak woman down at the carnival.

My advise? Be lead by the Holy Spirit. If you just have to just blurt it out, go ahead. Lord knows they need to hear it. Sometimes I still can't help myself. "JESUS LOVES YOU! YOU KNUCKLE HEADS!" But if at all possible, try to keep it simple. We can always speculate on who's the antichrist after they get saved!

I've also noticed through great trial and error people will always receive you a little better if they can tell you actually care about them. It is the demonstrated goodness of God that best erects your platform to speak. So ask God to give you a genuine love for those knuckleheads. The Good News rings loudest when it's spoken in more than words.

Jesus has such a wonderful way of dealing with us as individuals. I believe that's how we should deal with others, because sadly my latest revelation may only be a "But anyway..." to you.

But anyway- If you haven't already headed to the cash register on me, my great pizza revelation can be discovered in **Colossians 1:15-17**. And oh, if I haven't told you lately, "I love you too, you big knucklehead."

-Guy Sheffield 1-09-06