



**GET YOUR SMILE ON:**

**TODAY I WANNA**

**LOOK LIKE ELMO**

"You stand out like a strawberry in a bowl full of peas." That quotation is from one of three special greeting cards I recently purchased. The cards are part of the Kate Harper Designs for Hallmark, an adorable collection containing original children's quotations.

My absolute favorite is this: "When I grow up, I want to be either a heart surgeon or Elmo." My sentiments exactly. While I may be more than a little bit "grown up," I certainly haven't done everything I want to do. What a great goal. To be like Elmo—who is both wooly red AND incessantly cheerful, the Sesame Street equivalent of total joy. Half of his face is a smile!

Whoever says that funny things don't happen at church or among church people isn't telling the complete truth. I believe that the Lord absolutely has a sense of humor and He wants us to have one.

My brilliant friend, Dr. Elizabeth, is one of the best writers and editors I know. We have often talked about writing a book about the hilarious things we've seen and heard in church. God's people can say some funny things.

Elizabeth grew up in New York City. Her brother, a Pentecostal preacher, told her that a colleague eloquently announced to his congregation one Sunday morning that they could follow his sermon text in their Bibles by turning to the Book of First Crocodiles.

Often we are guilty of taking ourselves and our situations far too seriously. Sometimes we believe that, as Christians, we cannot laugh hysterically, enjoy smiling, or find humor even in those things that are primarily serious.

If you're not feeling well today, your best medicine may not be available from your pharmacist. Instead, it's on your face. Try smiling, even laughing. Experts agree that smiling changes your mood, makes you look younger and more attractive, alleviates depression, boosts your immune system, improves your mental alertness and helps you live longer. The list goes on.

A positive smile warms and heals you and others. Smiling helps you succeed professionally by reducing your stress and the stress level of those around you, making you more approachable, and positively impacting the responses you receive from people.

Putting on your best Elmo-style smile confirms that your overall approach to life is positive, claiming the promise of Proverbs 15:30 (Contemporary English Version): "A friendly smile makes you happy, and good news makes you feel strong."

Oh, and in case you were wondering, the third card says: "On your birthday, listen for the things that twinkle."

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