

by Brian G. Daigle

As we head into the summer, there are a few things Christians should keep in mind: 1) playfulness is next to Godliness and 2) the best kind of play is the kind which involves words pointing to the Word. With those two principles in mind, I offer three poems and I pass to the reader some great pre-summer words from N.D. Wilson:

“A New Irish Blessing” by Brian G. Daigle

May the earth float beneath you
May windblown hair be nothing that you lack
May the sun taste sweet in berries and wheat
May the rain kiss your skin with neither fuss nor fight
And, until the worms dine upon your brow,
May God show you that every bit is pure gift from above.

“*Creatio ex Materia*” by Brian G. Daigle

I scaled the heights of Kilimanjaro.
That was today, but what of tomorrow?
Would you think it quite queer
To see me draw near
A ginger home built of marshmallow?

“Among the Living Oaks” by Brian G. Daigle

Skyward veins of brown and green .
Stately columns from nature’s skin.
Crackled soldiers to line the walks.
To you. To me. To us they talk.
“Forget us not in concrete fields.
This moment we shared in Being’s yield.”

N.D. Wilson is undoubtedly one of the most able writers in today's market. Not only does he understand his craft, he knows his purpose. Below is an article by Wilson published just last week in *Christianity Today*.

“Lighten Up, Christians: God Loves a Good Time: Challenging ourselves to embrace the sense of fun infused in this world.” by N.D. Wilson

We Christians are the speakers of light. We are the proclaimers of joy. Wherever we go, we are the mascots of the gospel, the imagers of the infinitely creative Father, and the younger brothers and sisters of the humbled and triumphant Word. We speak in this world on behalf of the One who made up lightning and snowflakes and eggs.

Or so we say.

Saying things is easy. Meaning them—in the realm of will and emotions—is harder. Knowing what they actually mean is more difficult still. Living out who we know we are and whom we follow with total consistency is, well . . . have you ever ridden a white whale by the light of a blue moon in a leap year?

We say we want to be like God, and we feel we mean it. But we don't. Not to be harsh, but if we did really mean it, we would be having a lot more fun than we are. We aim for safety and cultural respectability instead of following our stated first principles: that we are made in God's image and should strive to imitate him.

Wherever we go, we are the mascots of the gospel, the imagers of the infinitely creative Father. A dolphin flipping through the sun beyond the surf, a falcon in a dive, a mutt in the back of a truck, flying his tongue like a flag of joy, all reflect the Maker more wholly than many of our endorsed thinkers, theologians, and churchgoers.

Look over our day-to-day lives. How do we parent, for example? Rules. Fears. Don'ts. *Don't jump on the couch. No gluten in this house. Get down from that tree. Quiet down. Hold still.* We live as if God were an infinite list of negatives. He is holiness, the rawest and richest of all purity. In our bent way of thinking, that makes him the biggest stress-out of all.

But how does God parent? He gave us one rule at the beginning: "You must not eat from *that* tree." *Only one tree was held back.* Besides, he was giving us an entire planet. A hot star. Wild animals to discover and name and tame. Animals with fangs and sinews that rippled in the sun. He gave us the Dragon to beat that beat us instead. And then he stooped down to save.

So now we have two rules—love God, love others—along with imputed righteousness, grace for our failures, and a door through the grave into eternal life. Do we act like all this is true?

Our Father wove glory and joy into every layer of this world. He wove in secrets that would tease us into centuries of risk-taking before we could unlock them—flight, glass, electricity, chocolate. He buried gold deep, but scattered sand everywhere. And from the sand came all the wealth of our own age.

Our God made things simple and funny—skin bags full of milk swinging beneath cows. And also hard: Skim the cream, add sugar from cane grass and shards of vanilla bean from faraway lands, surround with water cold enough to have expanded its molecules and become solid. Now stir. Keep stirring. Now taste. And worship.

Us: No more for you, Johnny. You've had enough.

God: Try the hot fudge.

God hung easily picked fruit on trees, and he hid the secrets of fine wine at the end of a scavenger hunt. He made horses with strong flat backs, lending themselves to an obvious use, and he hid jet wings behind the mysteries of steel and fossil fuels.

Without any creative help at all, our God made up peanuts and bulgy tubers. Squeeze out the peanut oil and boil it. Slice the tubers and throw them in. Now add salt from the sea.

Us: Those will kill you.

God: Take and eat.

We should strive for holiness, but holiness is a flood, not an absence. Are you the kind of parent who can create joys for your children that they never imagined wanting? Does your sun shine, warming the faces of

others? Does your rain green the world around you? Do you end your days with anything resembling a sunset? Do you begin with a dawn?

We say that we would like to be more like God. So be more thrilled with moonlight. And babies. And what makes them. And holding on to one lover until you've both been aged to wine, ready to pour. Holiness is nothing like a building code. Holiness is 80-year-old hands crafting an apple pie for others, *again*. It is aspen trees in a backlit breeze. It is fire on the mountain.

Speak your joy. Mean it. Sing it. Do it. Push it down into your bones. Let it overflow your banks and flood the lives of others.

At his right hand, there are pleasures forevermore. When we are truly like him, the same will be said of us.