

# Three Questions for Determining Character

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Will Rogers was known for his laughter, but he also knew how to weep. One day he was entertaining at the Milton H. Berry Institute in Los Angeles, a hospital that specialized in rehabilitating polio victims and people with broken backs and other extreme physical handicaps. Of course, Rogers had everybody laughing, even patients in really bad condition; but then he suddenly left the platform and went to the rest room. Milton Berry followed him to give him a towel; and when he opened the door, he saw Will Rogers leaning against the wall, sobbing like a child. He closed the door, and in a few minutes, Rogers appeared back on the platform, as jovial as before.

If you want to learn what a person is really like, ask three questions: (1) **What makes him laugh?** (2) **What makes him angry?** (3) **What makes him weep?** These are fairly good tests of character that are especially appropriate for Christian leaders. I hear people saying, "We need angry leaders today!" or "The time has come to practice militant Christianity!" Perhaps, but "the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God" (James 1:20).

What we need today is not anger but anguish, the kind of anguish that Moses displayed when he broke the two tablets of the law and then climbed the mountain to intercede for his people, or that Jesus displayed when He cleansed the temple and then wept over the city. The difference between anger and anguish is a broken heart. It's easy to get angry, especially at somebody else's sins; but it's not easy to look at sin, our own included, and weep over it.