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Short-Sighted Sarcasm

Our words should be kind, to promote love and unity.

I wasn't just a short girl. In the schools I attended while I was growing up, I was the *shortest* girl. Because of this, I was often teased. However, I didn't allow myself to be offended. In fact, I often laughed with those who teased me. For whatever reason, I never felt bullied.

But there was another kind of humor some of my fellow students used, and it did hurt. Sarcastic comments, made in an attempt to be funny, often inflicted unseen wounds. Regardless of the intent, sarcastic remarks can pierce the soul like daggers. Perhaps this is because such comments are usually rolled around elements of truth.

This is particularly the case among family members, whom we know well enough to make our sarcastic remarks to them very personal. What might seem comical to one person might not be so humorous from the other side. I believe that since we can't know how



sarcastic comments may hurt others, it is better not to use them at all.

Like most of us, from time to time I have said something sarcastic. Often I have wished, either immediately or later on, that I hadn't. I have recently wondered how often I've hurt someone by my use of sarcasm. Have I been a bully?

We generally overlook sarcasm as a type of bullying. But sarcasm can cut, berate, and belittle, and isn't that bullying? Chances are that we've never considered ourselves as bullies, but when we throw sarcastic darts at another

person, chances are high that they will feel injured.

During the time of King Mosiah, the people of the Church were taught "that they should let no pride nor haughtiness disturb their peace; that every man should esteem his neighbor as himself" (Mosiah 27:4). Knowing that we are sons and daughters of Heavenly Parents should help us determine how we act, what we do, and what we say. And that means sarcasm is often short-sighted.

Remembering that others are also children of Deity should cause us to treat them with the utmost love and respect. When we speak to our fellow brothers and sisters and to our family members, we can promote love and unity as we heed the words of a well-beloved hymn: "Let us oft speak kind words to each other; kind words are sweet tones of the heart."¹ ■

NOTE

1. "Let Us Oft Speak Kind Words," *Hymns*, no. 232.