

What Do You Do For Fun?

The Bible tells the story of Jacob. As a younger man he had taken advantage of his twin brother and extorted from him the major share of the family inheritance. A little while later he fooled his aged father, cheated the brother out of further blessing and then fled the country. Now, twenty years later, he must return to face his twin which has him scared witless. Had Jacob been upright he wouldn't have been worried sick. It's true, 'Conscience doth make cowards of us all'.

Our mouths go dry, our pulse hammers in our throat just at the thought of our shame being discovered. We imagine people are talking about us, snubbing us, avoiding us. A letter not answered or a phone call not returned torment us with the thought that our 'secret' is known. The pain we endure as a result of our lack of honour so far outweighs any pleasure dishonour brings that it's a wonder any of us stoops to being treacherous.

The young man tried to talk the young lady into sexual intercourse but she wouldn't hear tell of it. Then he offered her booze she wouldn't touch. A little later he wanted to share some marijuana with her but she turned that down, too. By this time he was thoroughly disgusted and sulkily demanded to know what she did for fun. She said:

"I never have to worry about being diseased or pregnant. And that's fun! That means I don't have to wrestle with a decision to abort an unwanted baby; and that's fun. And I don't have to wonder if I'm being pawed over by someone who might not want to know me a couple of months from now. And that's fun. I never have any difficulty remembering what I did the night before and who I did it with; and that's fun too. And I'm looking forward to the day when I can give myself totally to my husband rather than give a panicky fraction of me in the back seat of some car. And that's fun. I can hardly wait, but I will. I won't ever have to worry about getting a blood test that tells me I have AIDS or some other venereal disease; and believe me, that's fun. My parents love me more than I can say and if I were to get into trouble, of any kind, they'd be right there with me. But I never have to worry about seeing them crushed and shamed by some disgraceful behaviour of mine, and believe me, as much as I love them - that's really fun."

I've taken a beating when I was innocent and I've taken a beating when I was guilty and I can tell you, there's no fun in being beaten when you've asked for it. At least when you're innocent in the matter, you can always go away from the beating with the inner comfort that this time, if the truth were known, you suffered in innocence. And that, even in the midst of pain, is fun!

- by Jim McGuigan in The Irish Papers

A Prayer Suggestion

Do you feel good about your prayers? Do you pray as often as you think you should? Are you satisfied that you pray about all the right things? Would you like to do better in this important matter of prayer? Surely all of us sense our need to improve.

There are, no doubt, many good suggestions that are helpful concerning prayer. But here we offer just one simple one. ***Use your directory!*** That's right, use your church directory to help you to improve your prayers. Here are the benefits, as we see them:

1) It will be a big boost to your brothers and sisters in Christ to have you praying in their behalf. The word of God commands us to "*pray for one another*" (*James 5:16*). Even the apostle Paul begged, *brethren, pray for us*" (*2 Thess. 3:1*). So, we will be fulfilling a command and assisting our fellow Christians. And by using the directory we'll be sure to include every single member of the local congregation.

2) This process, if followed by all, will also insure that you are the recipient of the prayers of everyone else. What a comfort to know that everyone in the church is praying for you!

3) And, there's yet another benefit in this. Unless we miss our guess, when you get out the directory and begin to try to word a specific prayer for every other member in the local

congregation you are going to discover that there are some folks that you simply don't know. At least, you don't know them well enough to know what their real needs are. And, when you've realized that, we hope you will begin immediately to remedy the situation by taking the appropriate steps to get better acquainted with those people. Remember, we are to *"be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honor preferring one another"* (Romans 12: 10).

And so, let's pray for each other. Using your directory may be just the tool you need to do a better job.

- by Greg Gwin