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In Defense of Fun

Are you a hard worker? “Hi ho, hi ho, it’s off to work we go!” Many of us work incessantly. Work, Work, Work. While diligence and productivity are admirable, even faithful character traits, maybe we need to take a second look. Did you know that Americans work longer and harder than residents of any other “developed” nation on earth? Some say we are literally working ourselves to death.

Sometime back we ran across a magazine article in a clergy journal by Vic Jameson entitled, “If God Isn’t a Workaholic, Maybe We Shouldn’t Be.” In the article, Jameson notes our American propensity to work ourselves far too hard. We seem to feel anxious and guilty when we are not actively employed – every single moment of the day. But Jameson asks if this is a defensible posture for a person of mature faith. He urges us to remember that although an astonishingly productive cycle of work was present in the creation story, a cycle of rest was built into the story, too.

Of course, nothing is mentioned about what God did to occupy the time on that famous day of rest. So Jameson playfully considers that perhaps God spent the time having fun after all the serious work of creation was done.

Just imagine, Jameson says, “God has finished creating the skies and seas, and the animals of the fields and forests, and the birds and fishes and ants and bees and cockroaches, and people. Then God says, ‘I just don’t feel like working today. Believe I will have some fun.’ So that is what God did...had some fun. And while **having** fun, God made possible a number of things that **are** fun.”

Think about what God might have done on that day of fun. Maybe God conceived of human *creativity* and the genius of Leonardo da Vinci. Maybe God was already anticipating that great painting of Mona Lisa with her enigmatic smile that has captured the imaginations of art lovers and poets for centuries.

Or maybe God invented *hugging* on that day off. That is one of life’s finer inventions. There’s nothing better than a giant hug after a long day, or at the beginning of the day, or in the middle of the day. In fact, a hug is good anytime.

Or maybe *summer* was created for fun on that famous day of rest. The clock seems to slow a bit in the summer, ice cream tastes better, the sounds of baseballs hitting a bat take on an almost symphonic quality, while flip flops are accepted as formal attire in most places.

The point is, of course, that while work is a God-given enterprise that lets us create, build, develop, and produce, we need a break from work, too. This weekend we celebrate Labor Day, very fittingly, by taking the day off! Enjoy your rest from your labors. Try doing something new and creative. Hug your children and your friends. Or just sit back and enjoy the glories of a Florida summer. Revel in life’s sacred mix of work and play, and treasure your holiday!