

On Playfulness

Last Sunday, for Mother's Day, I thought that I would treat myself to an hour of uninterrupted yoga, just for me. As I had no Sunday morning responsibilities (a rare occurrence), during the Sunday School hour I made my way up to the yoga studio, locked the door behind me so that I would not be disturbed, turned on my music, and began to move. It was pure bliss.

For about 30 minutes.

The thing is, my studio is a converted Sunday School room, right down the hall from the third grade Sunday School classroom. First, I heard exuberant footsteps thundering down the hall. Then shouts outside the door.

"WOAH!!!"

"Why's it so PURPLE?!"

"Because my mom LOVES purple." (My daughter's voice.)

"What's she DOING?!"

"I WANNA DO THAT!!!"

The door handle started to rattle. (*Disappointedly*)
"Awwww!"

It rattled again, more emphatically this time. I looked up at the window on the door and saw about seven sets of eyes all staring wildly, longingly, in my direction. Then the sets of eyes

BABY BLUES

BY RICK KIRKMAN & JERRY SCOTT



disappeared and scattered with a thunder of footsteps as their teacher approached, shooing them up the hall and sending an apologetic look in my direction.

How often do we take the time to do something for no reason other than pure enjoyment?

How often do we see something fun happening, and resolve to try the door handle to see if it is locked, in an effort to invite ourselves to the party?

How often do we play?

In Psychology Today, Bernard L. De Koven writes on playfulness as a spiritual practice, noting that that toys and games are akin to prayer wheels: "tools to hold your mind to, to free your soul." In play, we enter into pure enjoyment with no purpose other than to free ourselves from purpose. We "celebrate our capacity for having fun together."¹ We relinquish control over all outcomes and, in the act of delight we begin to rediscover our true selves.

We begin to find a new power in the words "let the children come to me" – finding within ourselves a certain hidden place of wonder and delight that draws us nearer to the heart of God.

Questions for Reflection:

1. When was the last time you spent time in play?
2. Think about one thing that you enjoyed doing as a child that you no longer take the time to do. What would it feel like to re-visit that place or moment of delight?
3. What does your experience of playfulness reveal to you about the nature of God?

¹Bernard L. De Koven, "Playfulness Is a Spiritual Practice," <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/having-fun/201511/playfulness-is-spiritual-practice> (Posted November 23, 2015; Accessed May 13, 2024).