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**THANKSGIVING POSES A QUESTION OF CHOICE**

**By Rev. James L. Snyder**

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The door to my office exploded as hundreds, at least it seemed like that many to me, of children surrounded my desk. My defenses were down and the merry mob held me captive. Wisely, I decided to surrender and throw myself on the mercy of the gang.

Simultaneously, and in hi-fi stereophonic sound, the children assaulted me with questions.

"Pastor, what's ya doin'?"

"Pastor, is that your computer?"

"Who's that in the picture?"

"Pastor, are you working?"

"Pastor, why? ... why? ... why?"

As soon as I dealt with one question, three more emerged and it seemed as though the supply was endless. Should the little crowd run out of questions, they could always begin all over again. Moreover, I believe they did -- several times.

Admittedly, to hear, let alone answer each question, would have required a Moses-proportion miracle of parting the Red Sea. I chuckled to myself when I realized they didn't need me, or even want me to answer all their questions, as strange as it seemed.

The little pack really wanted to know if I had an ear for them. And I did -- two, as a matter of fact.

We see the tragedy of life in the fact that as people grow older they seem to lose their sense of inquiry. Answers replace questions.

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I remember what my good friend and spiritual mentor used to say: "Beware of the person who has more answers than questions. Life must truly be a bore to them. I know they're a bore to me."

I think good old Frank knew what he was talking about. No person is poorer than the man who has ceased approaching life with a question. Or, better yet, the man who has an answer for everything.

The man who has all the answers hasn't heard all the questions, yet.

Throughout the years, I have been plagued with many questions. All theologians have an overwhelming desire to explain everything and put everything into a nice, neat little package.

The less they know, it seems, the more dogmatic they are on what they know.

Questions are an essential ingredient of life. During my short career as a human being, and it's been a full-time job, I have pondered many questions.

Questions such as:

n Can God make a rock so big He can't lift it?

n How many angels can dance on the head of a pin?

n Did God really create politicians?

n Why?

I realize some questions seem to be silly and don't deserve an answer. A question, as I see it, requires an answer, and answers lead inevitably to choosing.

I don't know about other people, but choosing is a little difficult with me. When I choose something, it means I must forfeit the other.

The discouraging aspect of this whole mess is it usually boils down to an either/or kind of situation. Either I choose the one, or I must choose the other.

I don't like this very much. I much rather prefer both, if there's really a choice about the matter.

This week at Thanksgiving, it all came to a head -- mine. The culprit behind the whole issue was none other than the Mistress of the Parsonage. Just when I think I have my beloved all figured out, I am forced to go back to the drawing board and start all over.

The gracious Mistress of the Parsonage, knowing my addiction to theology, posed a query to me. The difficulty expressed itself in a three-fold choice.

I still am a little confused about the whole thing, but somehow I maneuvered through the theological

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quagmire.

The Master Chef at the parsonage put it to me like this; which do you prefer? A pre-Thanksgiving turkey, a mid-Thanksgiving turkey or a post-Thanksgiving turkey? Her insistence was for me to select one.

To me there is a slice of truth in all three, which is why I staggered at the predicament.

What do I really know about things like this? As far as I was concerned, a turkey is a turkey is a turkey.

Moreover, a turkey by any other name is still good eating at Thanksgiving dinner.

My nutritional philosophy is rather simple -- don't confuse me with options. Just set the blessed thing before me, give me a fork and let me go.

Unlike other years, this year a shortage of turkey threatened our little domicile and my wife was not sure there would be enough to go around. For this reason, she suggested that I, who bought the turkey

in the first place, should choose.

This is the basic difference between the sexes. Women love to plan the meals ahead of time and in minute detail. Men just love to eat those meals without the necessity of any noodle-work.

The biblical adage is my motto: "And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart." (Acts 2:46 KJV.)

My philosophical mindset notwithstanding, my companion insisted I choose between roast turkey and turkey salad sandwiches. What a choice.

There are other choices in life far more serious.

Joshua, in the Old Testament, understood this. He challenged the people of his day to "Choose you this day whom ye will serve." He also included a personal declaration, "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."

I'm with Joshua on this one.

Rev. James L. Snyder is an award winning author and popular columnist living with his wife, Martha in Ocala, FL.

### **Thanksgiving Holiday History**

**By Mrs. Party Gail Leino**

## Thanksgiving Holiday History by

... Gail Leino

America celebrates Thanksgiving every year by festive family gatherings, traditional holiday meals and offering thanks for all good fortunes. The

has a

history that dates back to early American settlers. These settlers were known as the Pilgrims and they were the first to have a

The Pilgrims came to America to escape religious persecution in England. They were granted free passage on the Mayflower on September 6th, 1620 as long as they would work in exchange for the next seven years. Unfortunately, the winter was so harsh that over half of the pilgrims didn't make it to the spring. Less than fifty Pilgrims survived the brutal winter out of 110, but poor health improved with the good spring to come.

The local native Americans taught the pilgrims about growing crops such as corn and what plants could be used for medicinal purposes. With The Native Americans help the Pilgrims had a good harvest in October. The Pilgrims invited local Native Americans and settlers to all feast in thanks for there bountiful harvest. They celebrated and feasted for three days and this became known as the first Thanksgiving in America.

President Lincoln would later declare Thanksgiving a National Holiday to be celebrated every fourth Thursday in November in 1863. We as Americans can all take pride and give thanks by enjoying this rich American tradition of a

with all our family and friends.

Mrs. Party... Gail Leino is the internet's leading authority on giving the best possible

, using proper

etiquette and manners while also teaching organizational skills and fun facts.

Thanksgiving Holiday History  
How to Become a Woman of Thanksgiving  
Thankfulness In Times Of Trouble  
Thanksgiving Traditions of Gratitude  
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