

## Trends

The porn industry generates \$13 billion each year in the U.S. Global porn revenues have declined 50% since 2007 due to the amount of free porn online. Eighty-eight percent of scenes in porn films contain acts of physical aggression and 49% of scenes contain verbal aggression.

Source: CovenantEyes

**Matthew 5:27-28:** "You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not commit adultery.' 28 But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart."

## Sentence Sermons

"Research reveals many systematic effects of Internet pornography that are undermining an already vulnerable culture of marriage and family. Even more disturbing is the fact that the first Internet generations have not reached full maturity, so the upper limits of this impact have yet to be realized."

—Jill Manning, Sociologist

**Proverbs 6:26-27:** "For by means of a harlot a man is reduced to a crust of bread; and an adulteress will prey upon his precious life. 27 Can a man take fire to his bosom, and his clothes not be burned?"

## News & Notes

Please pray for those mentioned in the announcements after services and others listed on the bulletin board in the foyer of the church building.

Please be sure to pray for all the needy saints. *Be sure to pray for all the members at Westside! Please pray for the Ferrell family. In previous Words of Life I informed the brethren about Susan Ferrell and her illness with a brain tumor. Shawn, Susan's husband, told me they received good news that Susan's tumor is very treatable. However, there are no guarantees, the tumor could return at anytime. Susan is scheduled to begin chemo and radiation treatments very soon. The entire process will be long with many obstacles. Susan has a difficult road ahead and so does the family. Please pray for Susan, Shawn and their three boys: Samuel, Micah, and Eli.*

"The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." (James 5:16)

If you know of any in need of our prayers please let us know so we can include them in the announcements and/or put their name on the bulletin board.

Please continue to remember Wilma Cardwell in your prayers. Also, remember all the faithful preachers and brethren laboring in difficult places (e.g., Philippines, India, Zimbabwe). There remain plenty of needs in the Philippines, India, Zimbabwe, etc. If you are interested in helping let Craig know.

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**Times of Service:** Bible Study, Sunday 9:30 AM and Wednesday 7:00 PM; Worship, Sunday 10:30 AM and 5:00 PM

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Please direct questions and comments to the editor.

# Words of Life

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"Lord, to whom shall we go? You  
have the words of eternal life."

John 6:68



## Do You Have To Be Told?

Craig Thomas

Recently I had a conversation with a Christian concerning the lack of zeal, dedication, and brotherly love shown by some members of the church. We discussed lapses of duty such as the failure to study Bible class lessons, support and attend gospel meetings, and to fully appreciate the work of preachers and Bible class teachers. "What saith the Scriptures?"

1) **Plain and pointed preaching.** Undoubtedly preachers need to "Preach the word!" (2 Tim. 4:2), make their sermons crystal clear and provide plenty of practical applications. Just as Ezra and the Levites, preachers today must "read distinctly from the book" and give "the sense" to help brethren "understand the reading" (Neh. 8:8). But, brethren can't be passive listeners! If their hearts are in the right place they will receive "the word all readiness of mind" and search "the Scriptures daily!" (Acts 17:11) "Do you have to be told" because the preacher isn't being clear? He's not helping you make application? Or, is it that you're not fulfilling your responsibility as a "noble-minded" listener?

2) **Forgetful hearers.** James implores "be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves" (Jas. 1:22). Most often its not the preacher or Bible class teacher's fault that brethren are lax in their duty. The lessons have been clearly taught and preached with application. The problem is simple: brethren are sometimes forgetful hearers!

3) **Ought to be teachers.** There's a time for a baby to be a baby, but it must grow up. Rather than strive for spiritual maturity many brethren are content to remain spiritual babies. Why? Often its because they are "dull of hearing" (Heb. 5:11). Such immaturity manifests itself in the inability to "discern both good and evil" (Heb. 5:12-14). In other words, lax brethren don't do what they ought to do because they're neglecting God's word! Brethren need to approach the study of God's word with the zeal and fervor many devote to their hobbies, businesses, sports teams, or careers!

4) **Symptomatic of laziness.** Employers teach employees the basic skills and duties needed to complete the job for which they're hired. The employer then expects the employee to show initiative, dedication, and resourcefulness. Why then when it comes to spiritual service do some brethren always expect the preacher to tell them every little thing that they need to do? They have to be "spoon-fed" everything! Would we tolerate such attitudes and behaviors in an employee? Instead, we need a good dose of Matthew 25:14-30! (read it!) Me thinks "having to be told" is being used as a superficial excuse for laziness!

5) **Shows lack of brotherly love.** When one uses the excuse that they "needed to be told" when it comes to discharging their spiritual service it shows a lack of brotherly love. Paul said, *"let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others"* (Phil. 2:3-4). When our service is neglectful and we consistently shift the burden of the work on our fellow brethren, how can we say we "esteem others better" than ourselves? How can we say we're looking out *"for the interests of others"* before those of ourselves?

It is understandable that a babe in Christ sometimes needs "to be told," But, it is shameful when mature (?) Christians grow slack in their zeal, allow their dedication to wax tepid and allow their brotherly love to wane. Then, to top it off, they have the audacity to hide behind the excuse that they too need "to be told." Godly preachers and Bible class teachers can help us understand and apply God's word to our lives. But, they cannot and should not have to tell us everything we need to be doing as a Christian. Let us be determined to attend every service (Heb. 10:25), diligently study God's word (2 Tim. 2:15), meditate upon it (Josh. 1:8), examine our own lives (2 Cor. 13:5), take responsibility (1 Cor. 16:13), and then we'll know what to do (Phil. 2:12). Remember James 4:17!!

### **Troublemakers Or Truth-Tellers?**

Larry Hafley

*"And it came to pass, when Ahab saw Elijah, that Ahab said unto him, Art thou he that troubleth Israel? And he answered, I have not troubled Israel; but thou, and thy father's house, in that ye have forsaken the commandments of the Lord"* (1 Kgs. 18:17, 18). Ahab was infamously wicked, and Elijah refused to let him forget it (1 Kgs. 16:30). Thus, when Ahab saw Elijah, he condemned him as a troublemaker, though the genuine cause of strife and confusion then, as now, was a forsaking of God's commands. Christ rebuked the hypocritical traditions of the Jews and urged a return to his Father's will. Those shown to be of their father, the devil, accused the harmless Lamb of God of offending them (Matt. 15:12). Their rejection of God's law for the teaching of men left them void of acceptance by the Spirit of God, and when this was manifest, they labeled the world's Truth-teller a troublemaker.

Human nature has not changed. Preachers today who speak *"the truth in love"* with reproof, rebuke, and exhortation are often slurred for ful-

filling their charge. Those who are without God resent being told their eternal destination with all the pernicious people of all ages (Rev. 21:8). Denominationalists consider talk about one body or church of Christ as being narrow and divisive (Col. 1:18, 24). They scorn the doctrine of Christ and his supreme authority by adding instruments of music which cannot teach, speak, or admonish as we are commanded to do when we sing (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16).

However, those lost outside of Christ are not the only ones who resent proclaimers of the truth. Some brethren are like the Jews were. They are angry at a man *"that hath told you the truth"* (John 8:40). Shout baptism for the remission of sins and they applaud, but just whisper something against lascivious dancing as a work of the flesh, and they will thrust darts (Gal. 5:19 - 21; 1 Pet. 4:3, 4). Yes, preacher, condemn immorality and immodesty in general, but don't tell brethren they cannot act, dress, and talk like their neighbors! Tell everyone, preacher, why we lay by in store only on the first day of the week, but don't let the brethren think you believe we must give as purposed and prospered, or you will soon become one who preaches *"for the money!"* Certainly, they say, *"watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry,"* but don't *"speak ... the gospel of God with much contention,"* as Paul did (1 Thess. 2:2; 2 Tim. 4:5). *"We ought to obey God rather than men,"* but avoid *"touchy"* subjects; don't speak *"all the words of this life,"* or *"all the counsel of God"* (Acts 5:20, 27).

Be resolute in your spurning of true trouble-makers, but, *"Am I become your enemy, because I tell you the truth"* (Gal. 4:16)?

### **Needs**

There remain many brethren in need of financial assistance. A good friend of mine, Dennis Yuson, is a faithful gospel preacher in the Philippines. Dennis recently lost a good portion of his support and is in dire need of churches and/or individual Christians to help him financially. When I visited the Philippines in 2010 Dennis translated several of my sermons. He is a good man, he is faithful and he is a tireless worker in the Kingdom. If you would like to help Dennis as he preaches the gospel, or if you know someone who would, please send me an e-mail ([craigthomas82000@gmail.com](mailto:craigthomas82000@gmail.com)) and I'll pass along his contact information. Remember 1 John 3:16-17!

***"But whoever has this world's goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him?"***

***1 John 3:17***