

Trends

According to CovenantEyes 51% of "pastors" say internet porn is a temptation; 64% of men and 15% of "Christian" women watch porn at least once a month. Nine out of 10 boys (6 of 10 girls) are exposed to porn before age 18 with average exposure at age 12. 15% of boys (9% of girls) have been exposed to child porn online; 32% of boys (18% of girls) have been exposed to bestiality online; 39% of boys (23% of girls) have seen sexual bondage online; 83% of boys (57% of girls) have seen group sex online; 69% of boys (55% of girls) have seen same-sex intercourse online.

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

"Never before in the history of telecommunications media in the United States has so much indecent (and obscene) material been so easily accessible to so many minors in so many American homes with so few restrictions."

—U.S. Department of Justice

Proverbs 23:7: "For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he..."

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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Editor: Craig Thomas (812-320-9569); craigthomas82000@gmail.com

Please direct questions and comments to the editor.

Words of Life

Westside
church of Christ

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

John 6:68



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Judge Not
Craig Thomas

Probably the most oft quoted, but sadly misused Bible passage is Matthew 7:1, "Judge not, that you be not judged." Non-Christians and Christians alike misuse this passage by using it in attempts to justify behaviors or attitudes plainly condemned by God's Word. Just recently I read a guest editorial in the *Sanilac County News* that misused this passage in an effort to justify homosexuality (Lev. 20:13; 1 Cor. 6:9-10). Such is an improper use of the passage for several reasons.

1) **Double standard.** Those who use Matthew 7:1 to criticize those who would speak out against behaviors and attitudes plainly condemned by Scripture are doing exactly what they condemn. They use the passage to "judge" that others should "judge not"! To be consistent with their usage of the passage they should say nothing. Thus, they are guilty of hypocrisy for using a double standard. Consistency thou art a jewel!

2) **Violates the context of Matthew 7:1.** Jesus' words cannot be lifted from their context without misusing them. Immediately after saying "judge not" Jesus said, "Do not give what is holy to the dogs; nor cast your pearls before swine" (Matt. 7:6). How can one determine if another is a "dog" or a "hog" without making a judgment? Later in the context Jesus says, "Beware of false prophets" (Matt. 7:15). How can one determine whether another is a "false prophet" without making a judgment? Thus, Jesus only condemns certain types of "judging."

3) **The Bible commands Christians to make judgments.** There are many, many passages of Scripture that require a Christian to do some "judging." For example, John said, "do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God" (1 Jn. 4:1). Paul said, "have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them" (Eph. 5:11) and, "if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a

spirit of gentleness” (Gal. 6:1). Obedience to these commands is impossible without making judgments of others.

4) **Acceptable judging.** What Jesus condemns in Matthew 7:1 is **hypocritical** and **hypercritical** judging. The hypocrite seeks to remove a “speck” from another’s eye when he himself has a “plank” in his own eye. He seeks to minimize his own faults while magnifying the faults of others. Are we never to help our brother remove the “speck”? No, for verse 5 tells us to do that very thing, but only **after** removing the “plank” from our own eye. Acceptable judging is not hypocritical or hypercritical! Jesus said, “Do not judge according to appearance, but judge with righteous judgment.” (Jn. 7:24) So acceptable judging cannot be surface judgment, but must be based on objective facts. Also, judging before one hears the facts is shameful and foolish, for the wise man said, “He who answers a matter before he hears it, it is folly and shame to him.” (Prov. 18:13) Finally, acceptable judging requires the use of an acceptable standard. Your opinion is no better than mine and mine is no better than yours and neither are the proper standard. The only proper standard is God’s Word, for it will judge all of us (Jn. 12:48). Let us remove our “planks” and “judge with righteous judgment.”

Do You “Love the Brethren?”

Larry Ray Hafley

Well, do you? “He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now. He that loveth his brother abideth in the light” (1 Jn. 2:9, 10). “We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death” (1 Jn. 3:14).

Some brethren are more loving and lovable than others. We will not feel the same emotional affection or attachment to some that we do toward others. However, we must “love (all) the brethren,” for “If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar; for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can love God whom he hath not seen” (1 Jn. 4:20)?

One man, not a member of the church you can read about in the Bible, but a member of a denominational church, which you cannot read about in the Bible, said, “I know I am saved and that I have ‘passed from death unto life’ because I love all my ‘Church of Christ brethren.’” Since the Bible says that one can know that he has passed from death unto life because he loves the brethren, was this man saved (1 Jn. 3:14)?

No, he was not. Here is why. How do we know if we “love the brethren”? “By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments” (1 Jn. 5:2). Those who “love God, and keep his commandments” do not maintain membership in man made churches,

worshiping God according to the traditions and commandments of men (Matt. 15:8, 9, 13). Their devotions are “in vain,” the Savior said. Their religious plant, not being planted of God, “shall be rooted up.” One does not “love the brethren” when he walks contrary to the commandments of Christ. If the man referred to above truly loved the brethren, he would “love God, and keep his commandments.” If he loved the brethren, he would not be endorsing a religious institution unknown to the New Testament. He would not be following human traditions that make void the word of God (Mk. 7:7, 13; 1 Jn. 5:2). Therefore, he has not “passed from death unto life.” He has not been saved. Have you?

Needs

There remain many brethren in need of your help. For example, faithful gospel preachers in the U.S. and foreign lands are in dire need of financial support. They and their families faithfully labor in the gospel and suffer from material deprivations due to their stand for the truth, concern for the souls of men and love for the Lord and His Christ. Other brethren are in acute need of the basics of life (food, clothing, shelter, medical attention). On the other hand many members of the Lord’s church enjoy all the economic advantages offered by America: a lavish lifestyle with large, well-furnished, well-heated/cooled and comfortable homes; vacations; recreational vehicles; widescreen HD/satellite TV; the latest iPads/iPods/PDA’s/smartphones, a trendy wardrobe, and a new, shiny SUV in the driveway. Meanwhile these brethren make sacrifices many of us cannot even imagine. Judgment is coming! 2 Corinthians 5:10: “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.” Will you sit idly by and not help these dedicated brethren as they seek to save the lost? If we ignore them, how will we answer the Lord on that Great Day? If you would like to help please send me an e-mail (craigthomas82000@gmail.com) and I’ll put you in contact with a needy brother. 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