

Trends

According to Barna 56% of teens and young adults think "not recycling" is worse than "viewing porn" (32%). Barely half of adults (54%) think "viewing porn" is wrong. It's chilling to consider: "This 'pornification' of popular culture means younger generations are coming to age in a hypersexualized cultural ecosystem. They, in turn, tend to be more open to sexual experimentation and self-expression—leading to further social acceptance of sexually explicit content. One cannot help but wonder where this self-perpetuating feedback loop will end."

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

Isaiah 5:20: "Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; Who put darkness for light, and light for darkness; Who put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!"

Sentence Sermons

"Pornography addicts have a more difficult time recovering from their addiction than cocaine addicts, since coke users can get the drug out of their system, but pornographic images stay in the brain forever."

—Expert testimony before the U.S. Senate Commerce Committee

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.

Words of Life is published by the **Westside Church of Christ** meeting at 1301 N. Enterprise, Bloomington, IN 47404

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

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

Please direct questions and comments to the editor.

Words of Life

Westside
church of Christ

Jan. 31,
2016

Vol. 8,
No. 4

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

John 6:68



Three Things Sin Will Do

Craig Thomas

The Hebrew writer warns about the deceitfulness of sin: "But exhort one another daily, while it is called Today; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin" (Heb. 3:13). Involvement in sin deceives its victims and hardens their heart (cf. 1 Tim. 4:2). Think of the alcoholic—there had to be the FIRST drink. The drug addict—there had to be the FIRST "hit." The chronic gambler—there had to be the FIRST bet! All victims of such sins were deceived by it. Ask them, and if they're honest, they'll admit they gave no thought to the consequences of their actions (Gen. 3:1-23). What will sin do? It will...

1) **Take You Farther Than You Wanted To Go.** The first drink, first "high," or first bet is as far as many planned to go. But all who end up as alcoholics, drug addicts and chronic gamblers had to take the first step. Also, involvement in one sin often leads to involvement in other sins, they come as a "package deal" (2 Sam. 11 & 12). For example, the alcoholic beats his wife, the drug addict or chronic gambler steal to support their habits.

2) **Keep You Longer Than You Wanted To Stay.** Those who fall victim are blinded by the pleasure of the first drink, first high or first win (Heb. 11:25). It gave them so much pleasure they are sucked into going after it again and again. Many think, "just one more time won't hurt, I'll quit tomorrow." They only intended to drink alcohol to be social, or smoke marijuana to be accepted into the "in crowd," or to place a bet just "once in a while." But they soon find themselves entangled and overcome (2 Pet. 2:20). Sin always entangles and entraps!

3) **Cost You More Than You Wanted To Pay.** Many never consider the consequences of sin. How many alcoholics planned on killing someone with their car? How many drug addicts planned on contracting AIDS or stealing to support their habit? How many gamblers planned on bankruptcy? Did they consider the physical pain, mental suffering, wrecked marriages, neglected children, broken homes, and lives destroyed by their participation in sin? Did they consider their souls are at stake? (Acts 5:1-10)

Some think “this can’t happen to me, I’m a good Christian and I don’t take part in such!” But what about Christians who smoke or look at pornographic material or take a “social” drink? What of those who dabble in the lottery? What of those who dress immodestly not giving a thought they can cause others to lust? What of those involved in adultery and fornication? Those in religious error? (Gal. 5:19-21) Do these take you farther than you wanted or intended to go? Can they keep you longer than you wanted to stay? Can they cost you more than you wanted to pay? YES! And, most importantly they can cost you your soul! Remember: *“Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night”* (Psa. 1:1-2). Therefore, *“Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men. Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away”* (Prov. 4:14-15). *“Be not deceived”* (1 Cor. 6:9-10), *“the wages of sin is death”* (Rom. 6:23). Are you being deceived by sin? Our desire is the same as God’s, that *“all men...be saved and...come to the knowledge of the truth.”* (1 Tim. 2:4)

A Big Commitment

Dan Gulley

Rock star Rod Stewart, himself twice divorced, verbalized the casual attitude toward marriage he and millions of others have acted out. He said, “I think marriage vows should be changed, because they’ve been in existence for 600 years, when people used to live until they were only 35. So they only had to be with each other for 12 years, then they would die anyway. But now, it’s a big commitment because you’re going to be with someone for 50 years. It’s impossible. The vows should be written like a dog’s license that has to be renewed every year.”

Stewart’s statement reminds us that millions have simply lost their way as regards marriage and God’s will for it. Men have by and large rejected what the Lord has to say about marriage and divorce. Marriage--as God would have it--certainly is a big commitment.

We are not denying that marriage is rough, tough work, sometimes more sour than it is sweet, more hurt than it is happiness, more give than it is receive. Anybody who says it isn’t has never been married. But none of that changes the fact that a marriage must be based on commitment, not convenience, if it is to last. A good marriage is not easy but neither is it impossible. What is required is a deep-seated commitment to the will of God and one’s mate.

A Christian’s Joy

Jim Sasser

“These things I have spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full”, Jno. 15:11. The joy of a Christian is a strange thing. If you do not have it, you know nothing of it; if you do have it, you want to give it away; and the more you give away, the more you have for yourself.

Jesus wants us to be joyful to the fullest extent. He said, *“I am that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly,”* Jno. 10:10.

Many people, especially the young, think that to be consecrated Christians, they must give up all joy. The devil would have us think so, but the contrary is true. God does not ask us to give up anything that wouldn’t hurt us if we kept it. A happy face is Christ’s trademark; and the watchword of Christianity is “Be of good cheer.” Christ himself spoke these words often.

These words not only comforted the disciples during the earthly ministry of Jesus, but they also reassured Paul when his life was in danger in Jerusalem, *“The Lord stood by him, and said, Be of good cheer Paul; for as thou has testified of me in Jerusalem, so must thou also bear witness of me at Rome!”* Acts 23:11. It was a solemn hour when Jesus spoke the words of our text. He stood in the shadow of the cross. Before another sun would set, He would be crucified. But he taught his disciples how to be joy-filled Christians. To abide in Him and be fruit bearing Christians, and this would bring them true joy and happiness. (What is that popular song of a few years back? *Don’t Worry, Be Happy*, jws).

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 soul’s 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; wide-screen 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.”* Please don’t 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