

## Trends

A record 70 percent of Americans believe divorce is morally acceptable, according to Gallup's 2008 *Values and Beliefs* survey. That's an 11-point increase from seven years ago. Mike McManus, co-founder of *Marriage Savers*, said two generations of high divorce rates have made divorce the norm in America. "Since 1970, that's 42 million divorces, shattering the lives of 40 million children," he said. "We have the highest divorce rate in the world, and for 70 percent of Americans to say it's morally acceptable is really quite stunning."

via CitizenLink.com

**John 14:6:** "For I hate divorce," says the Lord, the God of Israel."

## Sentence Sermons

"I have never let my schooling interfere with my education."

—Mark Twain

**Proverbs 9:10:** "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding."

## 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.

Pray for all the members at Westside! Susan Ferrell, a friend of the Thomas family from Michigan, had great news! Commenting on the latest MRI, the oncologist said, "it could not look better"! They've also been able to increase the chemotherapy dosage. Please continue to pray for Susan, her husband Shawn and their three boys: Samuel, Micah, and Eli.

Jennifer Shorter (Garner) a member at Knightsville is reported to be recovering well from her brain tumors; keep her in your prayers. She still has more tumors that may be problematic in the future. Also, please pray for Elias Dispennett (age 8). He is the son of Rob Dispennett, Knightsville's preacher, and has been diagnosed with Type 1 diabetes.

Christian Shadburne, the young Christian brother in Bowling Green (KY), is still dealing with cancer and needs our prayers.

Pray for the college students as they are now on summer break. Jonathan will be attending IUPUI law school this fall and Rachel plans to return to IU.

Please keep sister Wilma in your prayers! She gives all of us so much encouragement! God bless her and Virginia! Remember both of them in your prayers.

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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



## Three Things Sin Will Do

Craig Thomas

The writer of Hebrews 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, the first "high" on drugs, or the 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 that first step. Also, involvement in one sin often leads to involvement in other sins for they come as a "package deal" (2 Sam. 11 & 12). For example, the alcoholic beats his wife, the drug addict or chronic gambler steals 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, the first high or the first win (Heb. 11:25). It gave them so much pleasure the first time that 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 by it (2 Pet. 2:20). Sin always entangles and entraps!

3) **Cost You More Than You Wanted To Pay.** Many never consider the consequences of their sinful actions. How many alcoholics planned on killing an innocent person with their car? How many drug

addicts planned on contacting AIDS or stealing to support their habit? How many gamblers planned on draining their bank account? Did they consider the physical pain, mental suffering, wrecked marriages, neglected children, broken homes, and lives destroyed by their participation in sin? Most importantly, how many considered the fact 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 participate in such things!" But what about Christians who smoke or look at pornographic material? What of those who dabble in the lottery? What of those who dress immodestly not giving a thought that they can cause someone else to lust? What of those involved in adultery and fornication? Or, those in religious error? (cf. Gal. 5:19-21) Can 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) Don't delay, call today, let us show you God's way!

### Nice Doggy

Larry Hafley

God has likened his prophets and preachers unto watchmen and watchdogs (Ezek. 3:17; Isa. 56:10; 62:6). Watchmen are not to keep silent. Watchdogs must be able to bark. Watchmen must be loyal, faithful patriots. A traitorous watchman will spell doom and destruction for the nation he is assigned to protect. A watchdog must not become a sleeping dog, or a dumb (speechless) dog that *"cannot bark."*

By their very nature, watchdogs must maintain a certain element of controlled animal fury (Jer. 1:10; 5:14; 2 Cor. 10:3-5). They must know both when and whom to attack. To those they serve, they must be tame, though not timid; they must be obedient and ready to unleash their raw power upon command. A watchdog that turns on his master is especially dangerous.

Lately, we have been warned about watchdogs who have swung wildly out of control. Preacher-watchdogs perform a valuable service, but they are indiscriminately biting and devouring the good guys as well as the bad guys, or so it is alleged. If this be true, it is to be re-

gretted and corrected. Such a watchdog must be restrained and re-trained. If that fails, he needs to be banished to his own private kennel.

With fangs retracted and mouth muzzled, it is to be hoped that those watchdogs who know how to attack the bad guys while leaving the good guys alone will do so. Let them show the bad watchdogs how it is to be done. Let them favor us with appropriate barks and snarls at the teachers of error and immediately come back to the rest of us, wagging their tails and licking our hands, like a nice doggy should.

It can be done. Paul did it. He took apart the authors of apostasy, yet was meek, gentle, and patient *"unto all men"* (2 Tim. 2:16-18, 24-26; 3:8, 13; 4:2-5, 10, 14; Titus 1:9-11). If today's watchdogs are not doing this work in this way, will the paragons of watchdog virtuosity take the rest of the pack to obedience school and train them? Or, will they just lie there and "grrrr" when they do not like the way someone else does the work they should be doing?

The watchdogs who know how and when to bark often only snap at those watchdogs whom they judge as being out of control. They condemn and criticize their fellow watchdogs for doing a terrible job, but they rarely attempt to do the work themselves. Rather, they are seen with their heads in the laps of those who invent and foment strife and confusion. Which is worse, to be a friendly, apologetic lapdog in the camp of the enemy, or to bristle a little too vigorously on the side of truth? If these politically correct watchdogs would do the work the way it should be done, if they would take the lead and assault the invasion forces of false doctrine, those who do it badly might never have to get involved. (If any watchdog of the watchdogs wants to yelp at this article, let them be sure they yip like a nice doggy should.)

It is possible for a watchdog to be overly aggressive. Is it also possible for those who growl at watchdogs to be so concerned with their protests that they allow burglars to sneak in the back door?

I will bring the slippers and lie by the fire like a nice doggy if the self appointed watchdogs of the watchdog department will turn their barks and bites against the wolves who are stealing over the wall and snatching the wool of truth. I do not blame them if they do not surrender their "cushy" job, that of howling against those who howl too long and loudly to suit them. It is much easier to roll over and play dead and utter an occasional "woof" against a real watchdog than it is to defend the Master's sheep.

***"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 Jn. 3:17***