

## Trends

Today the average traditional funeral costs between \$8,000 and \$10,000 . . . about 42% of people are cremated. The US funeral industry accounts for about \$20 billion in annual economic activity, with around 130,000 employees that make a living on the 1.5 million people that go to rest each year . . . There are approximately 22,000 funeral homes in the United States.

- via Forbes.com

**Hebrews 9:27:** "It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment."

## Sentence Sermons

"Don't go around saying the world owes you a living. The world owes you nothing. It was here first." —Mark Twain

**2 Thessalonians 3:10:** "For even when we were with you, we commanded you this: If anyone will not work, neither shall he eat."

## 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! Please pray for Susan Ferrell and her family as she continues to recover from brain tumor surgery. Also, please pray for her husband Shawn and their three boys: Samuel, Micah, and Eli.

Continue prayers for Jennifer Shorter (Garner) a member at Knightsville who is recovering well from her brain tumor surgery. Also, please pray for Elias Dispenett (age 8), son of Rob Dispenett, Knightsville's preacher, who has Type 1 diabetes.

Please pray for my daughter Dawne. She was born with bilateral cleft lip and palate. She has had many surgeries over the years. On July 13th she is scheduled for a major jaw revision surgery at Riley Hospital in Indianapolis. Sherry and I would sincerely appreciate prayers on her behalf.

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

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



## What Am I Worth To The Local Congregation?

Ben Shropshire

Answering this question requires some honest introspection. It also assumes that all members of a congregation have some interest in whether they are of any value to the accomplishment of the congregation's purposes. This is a question that is easily avoided by those who may be afraid of the answer.

A congregation, according to the New Testament pattern, is made up of Christians who have agreed to three things: (1) to be a congregation whereby the many may act together as one in worship and work; (2) to submit to a common oversight; and (3) to pool their resources together to accomplish mutually agreed upon work. Such a covenant is effective only when "the whole body, joined and knit together by which every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share" (Eph. 4:16).

To some what the congregation does is something, apparently, just to watch sort of like a spectator sport. They come to services, but hardly participate in the worship. They don't sing, and we can only wonder whether they join in the prayers. They seem to have little interest in the sermon and may sleep through most of it. The Lord's supper seems to be observed perfunctorily. There would be no worship if it were up to them, but fortunately, others find joy and strength in participating in divine worship.

Some folks, I'm reluctant to say, view the local congregation only from the standpoint of what it does for them. The question they most frequently ask is: "What is the congregation worth to me?" They seldom stop to realize that the congregation can give to them only what someone else has contributed to it. If they are learning, it is only because someone else is willing to teach. They meet in a clean building because someone else has cleaned it. They profit from the singing because someone is willing to use his talents to lead it and others wholeheartedly join in. If all of these "someones" were to be like them, nothing would be done.

What am I worth to the church? Can I be counted on to help when there

is work to be done? Do I accomplish what I commit myself to do? Am I carrying my share of the financial burdens of the congregation's work?

Am I willing to do my share in the teaching program? Do I faithfully attend the services of the congregation? Is my membership in the congregation worth something to the other members, or am I looking at it only from the standpoint of what they can do for me?

Am I of negative value to the congregation; that is, as a constant complainer, a critic of the efforts of others, as one who selfishly insists on having it his own way all the time, or a pessimist who discourages everyone else?

Am I one who helps solve problems that come up in the congregation, or am I a part of the problems?

Instead of avoiding the answer to the question, "What am I worth to the congregation?" let me try to answer it introspectively and honestly. To paraphrase a former president, "Ask not what the congregation can do for you; ask what you can do for the congregation."

### **Can We Understand The Scriptures?**

Ryan & Craig Thomas

During the past weeks we have examined some basic and fundamental principles regarding the Scriptures. Today we would like to introduce another basic principle concerning the Scriptures that is critical to the faith of true believers in God and His holy word: The Scriptures can be understood. Many believe man cannot understand the Bible and those who claim to understand are denounced as arrogant, haughty and high-minded. Furthermore, many say it is impossible to expect everyone to understand the Scriptures alike. In order to put to rest these vain philosophies of man we need look no further than plain common sense and the Scriptures themselves.

In Matthew 7:21 Jesus said the kingdom of heaven is reserved for those who *"do the will of the father which is in heaven."* However, common sense tells us that before a person could ever do God's will he or she must first understand what that will is. This is why in Ephesians 5:17 Paul said, *"Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is."* (NKJV) If one fails to understand the will of God which is revealed to us in the Scriptures, and obey that will, one cannot be saved (Matt. 7:21-23; Heb. 5:8-9). The only way for a person to understand God's will is through the study of His word, the Scriptures (Prov. 2:1-5; 2 Tim. 2:15; 3:15-17; Rev. 1:3). Amazingly, Paul even said that through reading the Scriptures we can gain the same level of knowledge he possessed (Eph. 3:3-4; 2 Tim. 2:7).

But not only can the Scriptures be understood, they can be understood alike. We learn in John 17:17, 1 Thessalonians 2:13, and Revelation 19:9 that the word of God is **truth**. Truth, by its very nature, is exclusive and unique. To know the truth of any matter automatically eliminates every other alternative. For example, when we learned in kindergarten

that 1 plus 1 was 2 that automatically excluded 3, 4, and 5. When we learned in English that a noun was either a person, place, or thing that automatically excluded it being a verb, adjective, or preposition. Everyone understands this universal and simple concept when Math and English are considered, but sadly cast it aside when it comes to religion. Dear reader, if we understand and accept the Scriptures as truth, consistency demands us to accept what is intrinsic to all truth: Truth cannot have a multiplicity of "understandings." Thus, if we understand the truth our teaching must be able to withstand the examination and scrutiny of the Scriptures (Acts 17:11; 1 Pet. 4:11). It behooves us, therefore, to look no further than the Bible for religious guidance (Psa. 119:105). This should be one of the most comforting and appealing aspects of Christianity!

### **A Warning About TV**

Greg Gwin

Take a minute to look at this article which appeared in a local newspaper. It warns about the influence of TV on children. It's interesting to note that this alarm is not being sounded by a religious organization. Oh yes, such groups have had a lot to say about the dangers of TV - and rightly so. But this article points out that many others are also beginning to see the problems associated with the massive doses of television's immorality which our kids are consuming daily.

### **Pediatricians Rap TV's Influence**

American Academy of Pediatrics says parents need to change children's TV viewing habits. Doctors say TV has violence, sex and poor role models. Dr. William Dietz says TV encourages obesity, violent behavior, teen sexuality and alcohol use. Says Dietz: "Broadcasters are doing little to rectify this, so major changes will have to come home."

What is the solution? The experts say that we cannot expect any help from the TV executives. Instead, "major changes will have to come from home." Moms and dads, that means YOU!

You have to begin exercising greater caution and discretion about what your kids are watching on TV. You cannot afford to allow the television to be an unregulated "babysitter" for your children. Know what your kids are watching; set rules for TV viewing; establish limits on the amount of time they can spend in front of the set; encourage other more wholesome activities; get involved - do something positive with your kids. Parents, you must wake up to this present danger!

***"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***