

Words of Life

Westside
church of Christ

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

John 6:68



Please, Do Not Do That

John Hines

I came across a picture this past week. The caption read "Speak to your children as if they are the wisest, kindest, most beautiful and magical humans on earth, for what they believe is what they will become." While that sounds very sweet, may we suggest as the title has already said; Please, do not do that! There are quite enough spoiled children in the world, and yes, they become nothing more than spoiled adults.

Rather than telling children they are the wisest, hear and understand Solomon's words, "Do not be wise in your own eyes; Fear the Lord and depart from evil" (Prov. 3:7) and "Do you see a man wise in his own eyes? There is more hope for a fool than for him" (Prov. 26:12). Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child (Prov.22:15). They need to be disciplined and they need to be taught to listen to those who are wiser than them. They need to be taught humility, toward God and toward others.

We need to teach them what kindness and love looks like and does. All they usually know is how the world loves. They love watching TV. They love playing video games. They love getting presents. They love either being the center of attention or hiding in their room away from everyone else. That is not love. That is selfishness, slothfulness, and being rude. They need to be taught that it is better to give than receive. They need to be taught what sacrifice means. They need to be taught respect, to elders, to those in positions of authority in the government, to their teachers, to all, friend and foe alike. Is that being done today? Rarely.

As far as beauty goes; No, we are not advocating telling children they are ugly. We are trying to teach them to see people as God sees people, looking at their heart and not their outward appearance (1 Sam. 16:7). Instead we have 8 year olds who want to look like 13 year olds, 13 year olds who want to look like 18 year olds, and 18 year olds who want to look like 30 year olds. From selfies and selfie-sticks, to seeking compliments and affirmation on-line, to who-knows-how-much spent on make-up and retail therapy. It is no wonder so many men and women are depressed. They spend the majority of their time

Trends

Divorce statistics over the years:

- ☛ 1920, 1 divorce for every 7 marriages, 14%.
- ☛ 1940, 1 divorce for every 6 marriages, 17%.
- ☛ 1960, 1 divorce for every 4 marriages, 25%.
- ☛ 1972, 1 divorce for every 3 marriages, 33%.
- ☛ 1977, 1 divorce for every 2 marriages, 50%.

Recently the divorce rate is on the decline, but that's due to a huge increase in the rate of couples cohabiting. 48% of women entering their "first union" with a man are cohabiting rather than marrying.

—via Christian Apologetics & Research Ministry and US Census data

Malachi 2:16: "For the LORD God of Israel says that He hates divorce..."

Sentence Sermons

"Divorce is probably as painful as death." —William Shatner

"A divorce is like an amputation; you survive, but there's less of you."
—Margaret Atwood

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 a brain tumor. Please pray for her and her family.

Please pray for Alan Jones. He underwent deep brain stimulation to hopefully relieve severe facial pain. Alan held a gospel meeting for us in October 2014. He's been unable to preach for several months due to his affliction. Pray for him and his family.

Please pray for sister Virginia Brown's upcoming hip replacement surgery (2/15/17).

Pray for the all of our students. Schools are back in session and bring many temptations to our young people.

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.

There are many needy saints! Can you help?! Let me know.

If you know of any in need of our prayers please let us know!

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

Please direct questions and comments to the editor.

worrying about outward beauty as they fight against time itself, and they lose every time (Prov. 31:30). Why not teach them what Saul looked like, what Absalom looked like, and what Jesus looked like, and teach them to dress themselves accordingly (1 Tim. 2: 9,10). How someone looks better be more than just skin deep.

Do we expect people to be magical? No, we just want to be like Jesus, loving God and loving our neighbor as ourselves. We bring up our children in the training and admonition of the Lord and not provoking them to wrath. We lead our children rather than letting them lead us. We raise them. We can raise spoiled, selfish, brats, or we can raise humble, sharing, Christians. That is a worthy goal.

“Just One Drink”

Jesse Flowers

In May 2003, in a report published by the *National Highway Traffic Safety Administration*, under “Key Facts,” the second bullet point reads: “The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration’s (NHTSA) position on the relationship between blood alcohol concentration and driving is that driving performance degrades after just one drink.”

Just one drink. Some foolishly reason, “Surely just one drink won’t be bad for me.” “Just one drink won’t harm me.” And yet, NHTSA clearly states from their thorough research “that driving performance degrades after just one drink.”

Many Christians through the years have ardently defended the consumption of “just one drink,” or “just one beer.” “That surely one drink of alcohol would not be wrong.” “How could one drink be sinful?” “Yes, drunkenness is certainly wrong, but not just an occasional drink.”

The child of God is commanded to be sober and alert (1 Thess. 5:6-8). But just one drink negatively impacts our soberness and alertness. The child of God is commanded to add self-control to their faith (2 Peter 1:6). It’s a fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23). However, we begin to lose our ability to practice self-control after just one drink.

In fact, the wise man warns us to not even “*look on the wine*” because of the negative ways it will affect us (Prov. 23:29-35). In the New Testament, the apostle Peter wrote: “*For we have spent enough of our past lifetime in doing the will of the Gentiles-when we walked in...drunkenness, revelries, drinking parties...*” (1 Peter 4:3). Drinking parties (or “*banquetings*”) comes from the Greek word *potos*. The emphasis of “*potos*” is simply drinking in general, whether a little or a lot. And the Holy Spirit declares that Christians are not to act that way anymore.

Stop defending it and arguing in favor of it. Just one drink is wrong for the Christian. Those who truly reverence God and His all-sufficient Word (2 Tim. 3:16-17) will whole-heartedly agree.

Silencing the Voice of God

David Weeks

In the Bible faithful men listened to the voice of God and obeyed it.

When Samuel was just a boy he was enrolled into the service of Eli, the prophet. One night Samuel heard a voice call to him three times. He thought it was the voice of his master, Eli (1 Samuel 3:1-8). Eli, however, recognized that Samuel was hearing the voice of God. His advice to Samuel was clear: “... *if He calls you ... you must say: ‘Speak, Lord, for Your servant hears’*” (v. 9).

God no longer speaks to individuals directly, the way He once did. Today, God speaks to us through His Son whose words are recorded in the Bible (Hebrews 1:1; 1 Corinthians 14:37). However, although God’s method of communication to mankind has changed, it is still vital that men say, “*Speak, Lord, for Your servant hears.*” Unfortunately, in the 21st century, few people actually listen to God’s voice anymore.

People silence the voice of God in favor of their own opinions. People justify doctrinal variations and denominational creeds by saying, “God spoke to my heart.” What people are doing is equating their own desires and opinions with the will of God. They believe that their strong feelings and opinions amount to God speaking directly to them. If individuals by the millions all claim to hear the voice of God telling them to do things not taught in the Bible, there can be no standard of right and wrong. Every man will do what is right in his own eyes and the voice of God is effectively silenced (Judges 17:6). Only the inspired, written word of God unites people into one faith (1 Corinthians 1:10).

Millions of people now silence the voice of God in favor of popular cultural opinion. God condemned the practice of calling “*evil good and good evil*” (Isaiah 5:20), and yet every day brings new proof that good and evil have been flip-flopped by society. For example, the Bible condemns homosexuality as “*vile passions*” and “*against nature*” (Romans 1:26-27). This Bible fact could not be clearer, and yet popular cultural opinion praises homosexuality as a commendable lifestyle. Those who adopt this position do not care what the voice of God (the Bible) has said on the subject, they only care that they are in line with current cultural opinion. They are “*wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight*” (Isaiah 5:21). Those who believe the Bible and stand for its teachings are accused of hate. No, we love God and His word, and we love men and women enough to tell them the truth.

Folks, God is able to speak for Himself, and He has done so in the pages of the Bible. We are not at liberty to change His words to suit us. If anyone truly loves God, he must join Samuel and say, “*Speak Lord, for your servant hears.*”

“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