

Trends

"Top Ten Harms of Same-Sex 'Marriage'" (see last week for the first five):

6. Fewer people will remain married for a lifetime.
7. Fewer children will be raised by a married father and mother.
8. More children will grow up fatherless.
9. Birth rates will fall.
10. Demands for legalization of polygamy will grow.

-via Family Research Council

Leviticus 18:22: "You shall not lie with a male as with a woman. It is an abomination."

Sentence Sermons

"If everything is marriage then nothing is marriage."

—Benigno Blanco, vice-president Spanish Family Forum

Matthew 19:5: "For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh..."

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 Alex Chambers. He moved to Tennessee. If you want to contact him his new mailing address is on the bulletin board in the foyer; e-mail is: aec7201960@gmail.com.

Please pray for Dawne. She is scheduled for eye surgery in mid-August. The doctors say it is a simple procedure. But parents are concerned when their child and the words "eye" and "surgery" appear in the same sentence!

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 keep sisters Virginia Brown and Wilma Cardwell in your prayers. Their faithfulness sets such a good example and gives encouragement to all! Ditto for Al (our Barnabas!).

Pray for Eric and Whitney Holk and congratulations on their recent marriage!

Pray for the all of our students: elementary, secondary and college. Our young people will be starting a new school year very shortly.

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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. I recently read a newspaper editorial 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 spiritual "dog" or a "hog" without making a judgment? Later in the context Jesus says, "Beware of false prophets" (Matt. 7:15). How can we determine whether another is a "false prophet" without making a judgment? So, 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** judging. The hypocrite seeks to remove a “speck” from another’s eye when he himself has a “plank” in his own eye. 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! 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 fact. Also, judging before one hears the facts is shameful and foolish (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.” (see today’s AM sermon)

Religious Suicides

Larry Hafley

You have heard of the recent suicides of religious cults, in Canada and in southern California. Forty four have died in the two suicide pacts. This number, tragic as it is, does not approach the 913 who followed the notorious Jim Jones in Guyana, in 1978.

Unbelievers will paint all religious people with the same brush. In other words, all who profess faith in God are “nuts.” If you believe in God, you are a blind, fanatical robot. You have lost your mind. “*Much learning doth make thee mad.*”

Any valid points that are made against the cult suicides will have to be taken from Bible principles, from biblical standards. See the irony in that? Those who do not be-

“Now as he thus made his defense, Festus said with a loud voice, ‘Paul, you are beside yourself! Much learning is driving you mad!’”

Acts 26:24

lieve the Bible will use it to condemn the suicides. Do “quack” doctors invalidate medical science? No, true science is what discredits the “quack.” Do “shyster” lawyers prove that the legal profession is crooked? No, true jurisprudence arrests the “shyster.” Do religious cults make faith void? No, the absurd actions of religious cultists do not prove that all religion is ridiculous. As one must take truth to defeat the quack and convict the shyster, so one must take Divine revelation to refute human imaginations (2 Cor. 10:3-5).

Infidels cannot remain consistent and criticize those who have taken their own lives. If assisted suicide should be legalized, and if mothers may kill their unborn babies, why should an adult be condemned for taking his

own life? If a mother’s body is her own, and she may choose to abort her child, why is not any person’s body his own which he may kill if he chooses to do so? Unbelievers cannot answer without contradicting their own philosophy.

No it is not right to commit murder, and suicide is murder, self murder. But let an atheist tell us why it is wrong, or why it should be viewed as a sign of “madness.” If consenting adults have the right to engage in every form of vile sexual conduct without facing condemnation, why may not consenting adults agree to kill themselves for whatever reason? If, according to modern thought, one’s “sexual preference” or “sexual orientation” is no one’s business, whose business is one’s “spiritual preference” or “religious orientation”? Let an agnostic explain.

“Too Controversial”

Larry Hafley

While in a meeting recently, I handed a copy of a religious magazine to a brother who was visiting from another congregation. Kindly, but firmly, he let me know that he was not interested, “because,” he said, “that magazine is filled with quarrelsome articles; it is too controversial.”

Though I did not agree with him, he may have been correct in his assessment. Magazines, like men, can be overly contentious and disruptive to peace and harmony. Certainly, we should neither endorse nor support papers that are rife with strife (Prov. 17:14; 1 Tim. 6:3-5).

However, let us be careful in our rejection of controversial material. The first four books of the New Testament are full of the debates and controversies of Christ. 2 Corinthians, Galatians, and Hebrews are intensely combative and controversial in their nature and character. Shall we refuse them on the ground that they are “quarrelsome”? Is 1 Corinthians “a personal attack” against a local congregation (1 Cor. 1:10-13; 3:1-3; chapters 5-15)? Shall we dismiss it as being “divisive”? Who would say we should?

As long as sin and error exist, there will be conflict (Jude 3). It is not always pleasant (2 Cor.

7:5). It cannot be avoided (Eph. 5:11; 2 Tim. 4:2-4; Titus 2:15). (Let us not use those facts as a cloak for our own fiendish love of personal quarrels and strife. God will judge all who do so!)

With faith in our hearts and truth in our minds, let us prosecute evil and wage unrelenting war against it. Let us seek peace and pursue it, even if it requires the use of “controversial articles”!

“Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints.”

Jude 3