

Trends

“Christians divorce at roughly the same rate as the world!” This is an often-quoted stat but it has been proved to be inaccurate. People who seriously practice a traditional religious faith have a divorce rate markedly lower than the general population. The factor making the most difference is religious commitment and practice. W. Bradford Wilcox, a leading sociologist at the University of Virginia and director of the *National Marriage Project*, finds from his own analysis that “active conservative Protestants” who regularly attend church are 35% *less likely to divorce* compared to those who have no affiliation. However, nominally attending conservative Protestants are 20% *more likely* to divorce, compared to secular Americans.”

— via The Christian Coalition

Malachi 2:15-16: “...let no one deal treacherously against the wife of your youth. ‘For I hate divorce,’ says the LORD, the God of Israel...”

Sentence Sermons

“If every man would make his prime concern the comfort and well-being of his wife and every wife would make her chief concern the comfort and well-being of her husband, we would have very little divorce in the land.”

—Gordon B. Hinkley

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 pray for my son and his wife as they seek to start a new congregation in northern Michigan. Please pray Ryan can raise enough support to do this important work. Please read his recent report on the foyer bulletin board.

Please pray for one another! “comfort each other and edify one another, just as you also are doing.” 1 Thessalonians 5:11

Please pray for Rody and Tessie Gumapd. They are suffering from a variety of health problems.

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 all the lost souls, especially those in the greater Bloomington area. Pray that Westside might be an influence for good in this community.

Pray for the all of our students: elementary, secondary and college. Our young people are now back to school.

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

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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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The Women on Death's Roe

Abortion may have taken 59 million lives since Roe v. Wade, but it's created at least 118 million victims. Every one of those children had a mother—and not one of them will ever be the same again. For generations of women, a procedure that can take ten minutes will leave them with grief that lasts a lifetime. Groups like Planned Parenthood want us to believe that taking the life of an innocent baby is just a simple outpatient procedure. But according to countless women, the real pain begins once they leave the clinic. Lost somewhere in the pro-choice picket lines are the deeply personal stories of women trying to cope. And at least one researcher refuses to let that go.

Priscilla Coleman has spent years trying to expose the regrets of moms who've had abortions. Her latest study, just published in the *Journal of American Physicians & Surgeons* (in time for the 45th March for Life), ought to give us all a fresh compassion for the other face of the pro-life movement—the mother. The Left has tried to wave off the depression women face after an abortion, but they'll have a much harder time doing that now with the release of Professor Coleman's powerful journal article, “Women Who Suffered Emotionally from Abortion: A Qualitative Synthesis of Their Experiences.”

In it, 987 women who've had abortions talk openly about their regrets. What may surprise you is that the grief doesn't take sides. It haunts women on both sides of the political debate. According to the latest numbers, one in three women will have at least one abortion by the time she's 45, and almost all of them suffered emotionally as a result. Sixty-six percent told Coleman's team that they knew in their hearts they were making a mistake with their abortion, but most (58 percent) said they were doing it to make others happy. Sixty-seven percent said it was the hardest decision of their lives.

For many, the deep emotional scars were followed by a lifetime of guilt. Hurting, many reached out for help. Only 13 percent were seeing a counselor or psychologist before their first abortion—a number that skyrocketed to 68 percent afterward. Others turned to medicine to cope. “Only 6.6 per-

cent of respondents reported using prescription drugs for psychological health prior to the first pregnancy that ended in abortion, compared with 51 percent who reported prescription drug use after the first abortion. These data suggest that the women as a group were generally psychologically healthy before their first abortion.”

In one of the more heartbreaking findings, Coleman asked women what the positives were of their abortion. “None” was the biggest answer. They don’t talk about it in the rosy lens of freedom or feminism liberals use. On the contrary, most of these moms wished they’d known that taking a baby’s life would dramatically change theirs. “Even in an ideal environment,” the study explains, “wherein women receive adequate counseling, are offered support to continue their pregnancies, and do not present with established risk factors, it is still possible to be blindsided by an abortion and suffer ill effects due to the inherent complexity of abortion.” Telling the truth has never been good for business in the abortion industry. But people need to understand that abortion isn’t making a choice on life—it’s taking a chance with yours.

So when millions of Americans pack into cars and busses to come to Washington next week, join us in praying for the four decades of mothers who wake up every day knowing they made a decision they can’t take back. Let’s march for the survivors, giving them hope for healing; grace for regret.

—via Family Research Council

Gambling Craig Thomas

Over 90% of Americans participate in gambling during their lifetime. Rates are rising with 44 state lotteries, casino gambling, and on-line gambling growing fast. Many also bet on horses, athletic events, or participate in raffles, office “pools”, and other forms of gambling. Gambling has become socially acceptable and legal, but it is not approved by God. Gambling...

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1) **Violates the principles of love and the golden rule.** God teaches us to “love thy neighbour as thyself” (Matt. 22:39) and “whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them” (Matt. 7:12). “Love” here is of the highest form based on principles of truth and right, seeking only the best interests of its object not self-gratification. Gambling exploits others seeking gain at their loss. One cannot “love thy neighbor as thyself” (Matt. 22:39) while seeking to take what they have, giving nothing in return. No gambler wants to lose, so gamblers cannot observe the “golden rule” (Matt. 7:12). Gambling is merely “stealing by consent”.

“For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.”

1 Timothy 6:10

2) **Involves covetousness.** At its core gambling is covetousness, an inordinate desire for gain without giving anything of equal value. Gambling’s aim is gain at the expense of others, “something for nothing”. God warns us to “put to death” such desires for they are “idolatry” (Col. 3:5-6). The love for such gain is “the root of all evil” causing us to stray “from the faith” (1 Tim. 6:10). Man’s desires cannot justify immoral and sinful acts.

3) **Is addictive.** The fact that a toll-free number for the problem gambler’s hotline appears on many lottery tickets proves the point. The rise in gambling opportunities is causing this problem to skyrocket. We are to live in self-control (2 Pet. 1:6), not even allowing lawful things to enslave us (1 Cor. 6:12). Habitual gambling leads to even more sin. Gambling addicts are responsible for \$1.5 billion/year in insurance fraud to support their habit. Anyone with a dash of Bible knowledge and lick of common sense can see the sinfulness of such!

4) **Is bad stewardship.** Even a casual study of the “odds” for any form of gambling proves most will lose. You are literally “throwing your money away.” God expects us to be good stewards of what He has given us (1 Cor. 4:2; Prov. 28:20). Gambling causes us to lose our wealth, our reputation, and our good influence. Would you want your children influenced by the character of a Pete Rose?

5) **Violates the legitimate means for acquiring and transferring wealth.** The Bible specifies four ways wealth can be acquired or transferred: labor (Eph. 4:28), fair exchange (Acts 4:32-37), gift (Matt. 7:11), or investment (Matt. 25:14-30). Gambling fits none of these.

There are no winners in gambling, whether it be in casinos, at the races, in bingo halls, in lotteries or in an office pool or a raffle. No such activities meet the tests of God’s word.