

## Trends

According to a recent poll, most Americans -- 54 percent -- say they don't spend much, or any, time thinking about their own death. Fourteen percent say they spend a lot of time thinking about it, while another 31 percent say they spend some time thinking about it. Three in four Americans believe in the existence of heaven or hell, including 66 percent who think both exist. Eleven percent believe only heaven exists. Seventeen percent of Americans don't think either place exists. Among those who do believe in heaven or hell, 82 percent expect to wind up in heaven at the end of their lives; two percent says they expect to end up in hell. Nine percent don't think they will be in either place.

- via CBS News

**Hebrews 9:27:** "And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment,"

## Sentence Sermons

**"I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen. And I have the keys of Hades and Death."**

—Jesus Christ

## News & Notes

**Pray for one another:** "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." (Jas. 5:16)

Please consider donating funds to Zach & Taya Martin. Zach is a medical student and he and his wife Taya are planning to assist Ron Halbrook on one of his preaching trips to the Philippines. The Martins are worthy of our support. You can contact Zach at: zcmartin30@gmail.com.

**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 Ryan & Jennifer and the brethren of the Northern Michigan church of Christ. They are now meeting in their newly purchased building in Roscommon, Michigan.

Please keep sisters Virginia Brown and Wilma Cardwell in your prayers. Their faithfulness sets a great 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 face many trials and temptations at school.

**Words of Life** is published by the **Westside Church of Christ** meeting at 1301 N. Enterprise, Bloomington, IN 47404

**Times of Service:** Bible Study, Sunday 9:30 AM and Wednesday 7:00 PM; Worship, Sunday 10:30 AM and 5:00 PM

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Please direct questions and comments to the editor.

# Words of Life

Westside  
church of Christ

Aug. 19,  
2018

Vol. 10,  
No. 26

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

John 6:68



## Second Chance in Eternity?

Mike Thomas

Jesus said we will either go to heaven or hell because of our choices in life (Matthew 25:45-46). If we do not make heaven, will we get a second chance in eternity to obey God and avoid hell? There are those who believe this idea is taught in 1 Peter 3:19, which says Jesus (through the Spirit) "went and preached to the spirits in prison." The assumption is this preaching is done to convert those who are dead; namely, those in torments in Hades (Luke 16:23). But the context of Peter's statement shows he was referring to the teaching opportunities the dead received while in life and not what is done for them in eternity. The "spirits in prison" were those "who formerly were disobedient, when once the Divine longsuffering waited in the days of Noah" (verse 20). They were the people of Noah's generation, whom God judged with the flood because "the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually" (Genesis 6:5). But it's not like they did not have any prior warning to repent because Noah preached to his generation (2 Peter 2:5), as he was "divinely warned" (Hebrews 11:7). Thus, when Noah revealed what he received from the Spirit, it was Jesus' way of preaching to that generation, who were spirits in Hades by the time of Peter's writings. The implication is Jesus will eventually judge those He warns (John 12:48).

Those who are counting on a second chance after death to choose heaven are in for a sad awakening. The Bible gives no assurance of such a hope. Instead, it teaches that "it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment" (Hebrews 9:27). Not wanting anyone to perish, God is patiently giving men opportunities now to repent (2 Peter 3:9). He wants Christians to continually preach His word because He "desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth" (1 Timothy 2:4). The time to respond to His plan of salvation is now. After death, every person will give account for the "things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or

bad” (2 Corinthians 5:10). “Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation” (6:2).

If you are not a Christian, God has patiently endured your sins so that you might respond to His word upon learning the truth. That may very well be this moment, in this article and similar efforts. His message to you is that He loves you (Romans 5:8) and wants you to be

*“Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.”*

**I Corinthians 6:2**

saved from the spiritual consequences of violating His will: sin (6:23). The only remedy for that is the blood of Jesus Christ (Colossians 1:14). And the only way to contact the salvation of that blood is through the gospel (Romans 1:16). “Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life” (Romans 6:3-4). Those who say we are saved apart from baptism are misleading people. True salvation occurs when we believe in Jesus as God’s Son (John 8:24), confess it before men (Romans 10:9-10), and are buried with Christ in baptism (Acts 2:38; 22:16). It is only then that we are in Christ (Galatians 3:27) and prepared for eternity. Any other hope is an empty promise.

### **An Assault on Purity**

Joe R. Price

Jesus Christ said, “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God” (Matt. 5:8). The pure heart is blessed with clear vision of God and of His will. In this dark world of sin, a pure heart helps us see what pleases God and to know what is designed to destroy our souls.

Pornography is one of the leading threats to moral purity and righteous living in our country today. A pornographic tsunami has engulfed America (and indeed, the world). The proliferation of pornography on the internet provides extremely easy access via computers, smartphones and tablets. One can literally take their porn with them to school, to work and to play (not to mention into their homes).

Judge Robert Bork said pornography is “propaganda for fornication.” Bible words that describe pornography include “uncleanness,” “lewdness” (lasciviousness), “passion of lust” and “evil desire” (Gal. 5:19; 2 Cor. 12:21; Col. 3:5; 1 Thess. 4:5). Although pornography itself is not fornication, it often leads to it as it voyeuristically depicts this sin of the flesh.

No one is immune from being tempted by sexual sins. That does

not mean one must yield to such temptations; we have a choice in the matter (1 Pet. 2:11-12). But, as Bill Perkins said, “If you think you can’t fall into sexual sin, then you’re godlier than David, stronger than Samson, and wiser than Solomon.” It is foolish to take the fire of pornography into one’s bosom, for it is an inferno set on fire by hell (cf. Prov. 6:25-27).

The statistics are staggering. \$3,075.64 per second is spent on pornography (that’s \$103 billion per year). About two million people watch porn every minute. Watching porn has, quite literally, become the norm for adolescents. About 90% of boys and 70% of girls, ages 13 to 14, have reported accessing porn at least once. In the workplace, a *Barna Group* survey in 2014 found 63% of adult men and 36% of adult women have looked at porn at least one time at work in the past three months (38% of men more than once, and 13% of women more than once). The same report said, “64% of self-identified Christian men and 15% of self-identified Christian women view pornography at least once a month (compared to 65% of non-Christian men and 30% of non-Christian women)” (“Pornography Statistics,” Covenant Eyes, 20).

*“For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you should abstain from sexual immorality; 4 that each of you should know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor, 5 not in passion of lust, like the Gentiles who do not know God;”*

**I Thessalonians 4:3-5**

We know the problem of pornography is real. So, what do we do to overcome it? Here are a few Biblical answers to help anyone struggling with this sin.

**1) Repent.** God forgives (cf. Isa. 1:16-19). And, we must also forgive when others disrupt their lives and our with this sin (Matt. 18:33-35).

**2) Turn your heart back to God and crucify the flesh** (Gal. 5:24; Rom. 13:12-14). You must eliminate the source as well as your attraction to it (Matt. 5:28-30). Monitor the computer, TV, movies and every media that delivers pornography. Turn them off, and if necessary, get rid of them. Make concrete steps to flee lust and pursue righteousness (2 Tim. 2:22; 1 Tim. 6:12).

**3) Be open, transparent and accountable.** The appeal of secrecy and anonymity is part of pornography’s lure. Parents, a spouse or a responsible friend must have full, unfettered access to every delivery system to help you overcome this sinful addiction (watching porn has similar effects on the brain as heroin).

**4) Make a covenant with your eyes** (Job 31:1). Evil can seduce us, allure us. Make a decision of faith not to start down this highway to hell.

Victory over pornography is possible in Christ (1 Cor. 15:57). Put on His armor (Eph. 6:10-17).