

Trends

Approximately one in 100 American women and two in 100 American men identify as homosexual . . . Americans are becoming more accepting in their views of homosexuality. 63% of Americans said in 2016 that homosexuality should be accepted by society, compared with 51% in 2006.

- via Pew Research Center

Romans 1:26-27 “. . . God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: and likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly . . .”

Sentence Sermons

“If we cannot have moral feelings against homosexuality, can we have it against murder? Can we have it against other things?”

—Antonin Scalia, late U.S. Supreme Court Justice

I Corinthians 6:9-10: “Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites...shall inherit the kingdom of God.”

News & Notes

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

Please pray for the success of Ron Halbrook’s 72nd preaching trip to the Philippines (Nov. 27-Dec. 18). If you would like to contribute to the effort see brother Craig.

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.

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

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

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

Please direct questions and comments to the editor.

Words of Life

Westside church of Christ

Dec. 16, 2018

Vol. 10, No. 38

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

John 6:68



Homosexuality

Tom Moody

There was a lot of publicity a few years ago about studies indicating a “genetic predisposition” to homosexuality, but there has never been anything near proof that homosexuality cannot be helped and is genetic. If someone contends that it is genetically driven, the burden of proof is on the one making that contention. It cannot be proven. Some other thoughts:

1. Homosexuality is “conduct.” We do not deny that someone may have homosexual thoughts or temptations. But what makes someone homosexual is committing homosexual acts. Most people confuse a “tendency” or a “temptation” with the act. I may be tempted to rob a bank, but that does not make me a bank robber. I am a bank robber only when I rob the bank. I would not dispute that someone may have “homosexual tendencies.” That does not mean that they have no choice but to commit homosexual acts. People choose the kind of behavior they engage in. Someone with the temptation to commit homosexual acts must discipline themselves and work to overcome their temptation just as someone tempted to commit heterosexual fornication or someone tempted to steal.

2. The fact that a condition has a genetic background does not make it good. The very same genetic studies that have been used to justify homosexuality also produced information about a number of genetic defects such as Down’s syndrome. If there were a way to prevent or correct that genetic defect, we would do it. Should we be looking for a way to prevent or correct the “genetic defect” which supposedly causes homosexuality?

3. We know that there are “genetic predispositions” to certain behaviors. For example, there is evidence of a genetic predisposition to alcoholism. If someone knows they have such a genetic predisposition, they would be wise to avoid the behavior (drinking alcoholic beverages) that can cause them a serious problem. Furthermore, they have that choice! That person is not forced to drink, or to become a drunkard. He may have “predisposition” to

alcoholism, but whether he ever takes a drink is a matter of choice and behavior.

4. If the person with whom you are discussing has regard for the Bible, I would point out that passages such as 1 Corinthians 6:9-11 teach that homosexuals (as well as drunkards, thieves, adulterers and idolaters) learned to cease that behavior. If they could learn to cease it, it must have been something they originally learned to do. Nevertheless, whether it was learned or inherited behavior, they still could stop the behavior, and had to do so to be right with God.

Are You Upset and Concerned? Have Questions?

Greg Gwin

Do you wonder why things are done the way they are done? Do you have questions about the work, worship or operation of the congregation? Does it seem that there are things going on that you don't understand? Are there issues floating around that trouble you? Are there times when you don't really agree with the decisions that are being made?

If so, join the club! We all face the kind of questions and concerns that we've just described. The big question is not: Will such issues arise? The question is: How will YOU deal with these things when they happen? Let us offer some do's and don'ts for handling these potentially difficult situations.

DON'T...

- Don't get angry and upset before you have gathered all the facts.
- Don't gossip or backbite. This doesn't help, and it is a sin (Proverbs 6:19).
- Don't complain if you don't intend to get busy correcting the problem. Typically, churches have way too many fault-finders, and not enough problem solvers.
- Don't immediately assume the worst about your brethren. Too often we hear harsh judgmental words about the elders, the preacher, or other members before the facts have all been sorted out. True love demands better than this (2 Cor. 13:4-7).

DO...

- Ask for information. Very often any disagreement or controversy can be quickly cleared up this way.
- If there is a problem, go directly to the source. Speak to the one (s) involved and work for a solution.
- Pray for wisdom in dealing with the problem, asking for God's help to do and say the right things (Jas. 1:5).
- Maintaining sound doctrine is the highest priority (Gal 1:8,9), but maintaining peace must also be an important goal for every member (Eph. 4:1-3).

Fellowship

Larry Hafley

Much is said about "fellowship with God." The term, fellowship, is used by many who have no concept of "*the communion (fellowship) of the Holy Spirit*" (2 Cor. 13:14).

(1) To some, it means association and acceptance with God apart from salvation. Baptists speak of those who are "*out of fellowship with God*" because of sin, but who, nonetheless, "maintain their salvation." Such a view is totally foreign to the word of God (2 Cor. 6:14-7:1; 1 Jn. 1:5-2:6).

(2) Others associate "*fellowship*" with carnal, worldly, and physical activities. When atheists convene to fight against God, they have "fellowship." Workers have "fellowship" on the job. There is "fellowship" at a family reunion. Brethren who fish or drink coffee together have "fellowship." However, it is not the Biblical, spiritual fellowship spoken of in the word of God (1 Cor. 1:9; 1 Jn. 1:3, 7).

When brethren argue that one may be involved in moral sin and doctrinal error and yet maintain his "*fellowship*" with God, they sound like the Baptists under the first point above (Rom. 13:13, 14; 16:17). When brethren speak of leaving a worship assembly in order to "have a period of fellowship" in a dining area, they identify with the second position (1 Cor. 10:6, 7).

Elements Of Scriptural Fellowship

First, it is a state into which we are called "*by the gospel*" (1 Cor. 1:9; Eph. 3:6; 2 Thess. 2:14). One cannot have fellowship with God until he obeys the gospel (Cf. 2 Thess. 1:8; 2:14). The apostles "*declared*" their message "*that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ*" (1 Jn. 1:3). "Feel good" stories and amusing, heart-warming tales may lift one's self esteem, but they cannot convert the soul and give it fellowship with God (Rom. 1:16; Psa. 19:7).

Second, one who is in fellowship with God is a member of the body, the church of Christ (Eph. 2:19-22; 3:6). Those who claim fellowship with God, but who are not members of the church, are deceived. Worse yet, they are lost (Eph. 2:12, 16). Those who dismiss preaching about the church as being out of date and old-fashioned cannot lead men to fellowship with God, for that fellowship can only be attained in the church (Eph. 2:16, 19-22; 3:6).

Third, living in sin and moral darkness is contrary to spiritual fellowship with God, for God has "*called (us) out of darkness into his marvelous light*" (1 Pet. 2:9, 11). Note the contrast between "*the children of darkness*" and the "*children of light*" (Eph. 5:6-11; 1 Thess. 5:4-7).

My dear, dying friend, are you in fellowship with God? If not, by obeying the gospel, you can be "*called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord*" (1 Cor. 1:9). Why not do so today?