

## 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

“The Declaration of Independence laid the cornerstone of human government upon the first precepts of Christianity.”

—John Quincy Adams, 6th President of the United States

**Proverbs 14:34:** “Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people.”

## News & Notes

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

Please pray for Malachi Darling and his family. Malachi’s mother, Donna, passed away this past recently.

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.

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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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## Are We (As Some Claim) Making Divorce an Unforgivable Sin?

Frank Himmel

Jesus said, “Whoever divorces his wife, except for fornication, and marries another woman, commits adultery” (Mt. 19:9).

What if a man does what Jesus prohibited? He divorces his wife simply because he no longer loves her, then later he marries another woman. Clearly, he is guilty of adultery. Now, what if this man wants to be forgiven? Let’s assume he is not a Christian. He learns about Jesus’ atonement, believes, and wants to be baptized into Christ. Can he continue in his marriage to his second wife? Many say yes, since baptism is for forgiveness of sins (Acts 2:38). If someone objects that this unauthorized remarriage is still adultery, the objector may be accused of making divorce/adultery an unforgivable sin.

What if a man is married to multiple women? (It is illegal in this country, but not in all.) He ignores God’s law of one man, one woman (Mt. 19:5-6). He is guilty of polygamy. Now, what if this man wants to be forgiven? He, too, wants to be baptized into Christ. Can he continue to live with all these women? If not, why not? Why does forgiveness not cleanse his wrong relationships? Is polygamy an unforgivable sin?

What if a man is living with a woman? They don’t bother with marriage, they just live together. Their cohabitation makes them guilty of fornication (Heb. 13:4). Now, what if this man wants to be forgiven? He, too, wants to be baptized into Christ. Can he continue to live with the woman? If not, why not? Why does forgiveness not cleanse his wrong relationship? Is fornication an unforgivable sin?

What if a man is living with another man? They are not merely roommates, they are lovers: “men with men committing indecent acts” (Rom. 1:27). They are guilty of homosexuality. Now, what if this man wants to be forgiven? He, too, wants to be baptized into Christ. Can he continue to live with

the man? If not, why not? Why does forgiveness not cleanse his wrong relationship? Is homosexuality an unforgivable sin?

Four relationships. Each one is wrong. Why, then, do so many say that the last three must end if one wants to be right with God, but the first may continue? What's the difference? The only difference I see is that the first is more socially acceptable. (It will be interesting to see how the fourth is viewed as homosexuality becomes increasingly acceptable.)

The question is not, "What sin(s) can be forgiven?" The question is, "What does God require in order to be forgiven?" God requires repentance, as well as belief and baptism (Acts 2:38; 3:19; 17:30). Repentance is a change of heart and a corresponding change of life (Lk. 3:8-14; Acts 26:20). One has not repented when he determines to continue right on in his sin, whatever it is. And one who will not repent cannot expect to be forgiven.

**Editor's note:** I would like to expand a bit on the last paragraph. What does repentance involve? As brother Himmel correctly points out it requires "a change of heart and a corresponding change of life (Lk. 3:8-14; Acts 26:20; emp. mine)." Several times over the years I've been approached by brethren who divorced for reasons other than adultery. They were seeking permission to scripturally remarry. They were looking for a loophole. I simply took them to Matthew 19:9 and had them read and reflect on it. Then I asked them, "What if I kidnapped your child and then obeyed the gospel? Who gets to keep the child?" So far, I've never had anyone not get the point. I've had some who subsequent to this conversation did not obey Matthew 19:9; but, I've not had one person who did not get the point and understand God's truth.

### Peer Pressure Gender Perils

February 01, 2019

Parents used to worry about "peer pressure" encouraging their kids to experiment with alcohol or drugs, or to have sex. Now, they have to worry that it may encourage their kids (especially daughters) to change sex altogether

If you are a parent of a child or teenager, you owe it to yourself to read *World* magazine's latest cover story, which addresses the relatively new but expanding phenomenon of "rapid-onset gender dysphoria," abbreviated "ROGD."

Advocates for the LGBT movement have long argued that you can diagnose "gender dysphoria" in children who are "consistent, insistent, and persistent" in expressing a discomfort with their birth sex from an

early age. Just like we are (wrongly) told about people who identify as homosexual, people who identify as transgender are born that way, we've been assured.

Now, however, social trends are evolving so rapidly that even the pseudo-scientists of the sexual revolution are having a hard time keeping up. Children (especially girls) who have successfully navigated childhood without a hint of gender confusion are suddenly, shortly after hitting puberty, declaring that they are the opposite sex (or "genderqueer," or "agender," or one of dozens of other "gender identities").

"What's going on?" parents ask. "Is this a biological issue?" If it were, we wouldn't expect such declarations to suddenly emerge from a half a dozen girls in one friend group at the same time. And we wouldn't expect them to use almost the exact same language in making such declarations.

Last summer, Dr. Lisa Littman of Brown University published a study based on interviews with over 200 parents of children who had experienced "rapid-onset gender dysphoria." Most of the parents were not social conservatives (85% supported allowing legal civil marriages for same-sex couples), but they were taken aback by what happened to their children.

Two things were common to the parental accounts -- neither of which had anything to do with being "born that way." There was a strong element of "social contagion" at work; and the young people were being coached by websites as to how to demand -- and get -- puberty-blocking or cross-sex hormones and even, for some, elective double mastectomies. And in 2019, such teens are not inviting persecution to be "true to themselves" -- 60 percent of parents thought coming out as transgender increased their child's popularity at school. "Being trans is a gold star in the eyes of other teens," wrote one.

*"The woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man, neither shall a man put on a woman's garment: for all that do so are abomination unto the LORD thy God."*

**Deuteronomy 22:5**

FRC's Cathy Ruse and Peter Sprigg have previously written about the Littman study, and the transgender backlash it provoked. It now seems clear that among the values parents need to instill in children from an early age is an appreciation for how God made them male or female. And limiting children's time on the internet and social media is not just to make sure they get their homework done.

—Tony Perkins Washington Update