

## Trends

In 2016, nearly 45,000 Americans age 10 or older died by suicide. Suicide is the 10th leading cause of death and is one of just three leading causes that are on the rise. In the U.S. in 2017 there about ~1.4 million suicide attempts with 47,173 deaths (129/day; one every 11 minutes).

via Centers for Disease Control & American Foundation for Suicide Prevention

**Isaiah 41:10:** "Fear not, for I am with you; Be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, Yes, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand."

## Sentence Sermons

"Suicide is a permanent solution to a temporary problem..."  
—Phil Donahue

**Philippians 4:6-7:** "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; 7 and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."

## News & Notes

Pray that the excellent preaching we experienced at our recent gospel meeting continues to influence all of us for good! We extend our sincerest thanks to Stacy Crim for his excellent preaching!

Please pray for Zachary Wallace. He is not faithfully attending services as he should (Heb. 10:24-25). "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." (Jas. 5:16)

Please keep sister Wilma Cardwell in your prayers. She is an encouragement to all of us!

Pray for all our members who do not attend regularly. Try to encourage them!

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.

Please let us know of any in need of our prayers! We'll announce it and post it.

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Please direct questions and comments to the editor.

# Words of Life

Westside church of Christ

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

John 6:68



Church of Christ Golf Classic

Larry Hafley

Craig Straight sent us a note about "The Church Of Christ Golf Classic" being conducted in the Dallas, Ft. Worth area. When he inquired about scriptural authority for the church to be putting on a "Golf Classic," he received the following reply:

Craig,

"Your question is, 'Was honor and reverence brought to the Name of Christ, when His Name and Church was associated with a golf game?'"

"Yes. The men of our church gathered for a time of fellowship. We showed the world you can have fun and still be a Christian. We were in the world but not of the world. No it was not revealed to us in scripture. Golf was not around during the time of the NT. It might have been directed to us by the Holy Spirit. The Lord probably knew we needed a time for our men to gather for encouragement and fellowship and thus prompted the Holy Spirit to put that on our hearts. Yes, this brought glory to the Name of our Lord. I'm sorry this hurts your cause for Christ. It helped ours by building a sense of unity among the men who participated. Thus building a stronger church for the cause of Christ."

Observe how casually our brother describes "fellowship." Our fellowship is in Christ through the word of God. "That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you that, ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ...if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another" (1 Jn. 1:3, 4, 7).

"If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God."

1 Peter 4:11

We have fellowship with one another as we obey the teachings given by the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:42; 1 Cor. 10:16-21; 11:2, 23-26). Are sports in general, and golf in particular, one of those Spirit sanctioned sources of spiritual fellowship in the one body (1 Cor. 12:13)?

The brother above is not certain. He says the church sponsored golf tournament

"might have been directed to us by the Holy Spirit," that the Lord "probably knew" they needed a time for "encouragement and fellowship and thus

**"Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you."**

**John 15:14**

prompted the Holy Spirit to put that on (their) hearts." ("Might" and "probably knew" are well known "weasel words." What our brother meant is this: "We cannot find such things in the Bible, but we want them so badly that we are willing to add them to the work of the church and blame God for our presumption.")

So, separate and apart word of God in the Bible, we have the Lord directing and prompting the Holy Spirit to reveal the need for golf tournaments by placing them "on our hearts." Given that criteria, that standard of authority, what could not be justified by the will of man? (1) Want to count beads and say the rosary? God "probably knew" we needed to do it and so "prompted the Holy Spirit to put that on our hearts." (2) Want to justify Easter and Christmas as scriptural worship activities? God "probably knew" we needed such human traditions, so he prompted the Spirit to "put (them) on our hearts." (3) Want church musical pageants complete with instrumental music and dancing? God "probably knew" and "prompted the Holy Spirit to put that on our hearts." (4) Want the convenience of sprinkling for baptism? God "probably knew...and prompted the Holy Spirit..." Again, what is there that cannot be justified by such an argument?

Brethren, do you see why the need is so great for plain gospel preaching, for lessons on the need for Bible authority and how to establish it? "*Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by?*"

### **The Meaning of Obedience**

L. A. Mott, Jr.

Those who question the values of Old Testament study should consider the fact that no place in the word of God defines obedience with greater precision and clarity than the book of Deuteronomy. Special attention should be focused upon three passages:

*"Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish from it, that ye may keep the commandments of Jehovah your God which I command you"* (Deut. 4:2).

*"Ye shall observe to do therefore as Jehovah your God hath commanded you: ye shall not turn aside to the right hand or to the left."* (Deut. 5:32).

*"What thing soever I command you, that shall ye observe to do: thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it"* (Deut. 12:32).

What is suggested is that obedience requires doing exactly what God commands without modification. Israel was warned against adding to or

**"And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him."**

**Colossians 3:17**

diminishing from God's commandment, and in the first of the three verses the purpose of such strict adherence to the divine command is assigned — "*that (i.e., in order that) ye may keep the commandments of Jehovah your God.*" This is simply saying that the only way to keep the commandments of God is to do exactly as God says, without addition or subtraction.

**"Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar."**

**Proverbs 30:6**

When one adds to or diminishes from the divine commandment, and then fulfills the modified version, he has not kept the commandment of God at all; he has done as he pleases. That is a lesson worth remembering. The commandments of God that are in force today are not the same commandments which God gave in an earlier age. But the meaning of obedience does not change, no matter what commandments God gives.

### **Satan Has A Plan Too!**

Greg Gwin

One of the best known of Jesus' parables is the parable of the sower. In it we learn of God's plan for reaching good and honest hearts with the gospel. The seed is the word of God (Lk. 8:11), and we are the sowers. The parable teaches us to be sowing the seed anywhere and everywhere - with the hope that it will reach the good ground where it will bear fruit.

It is interesting that Matthew's account of the parable of the sower is followed immediately by the lesser-known parable of the tares. This close connection is not by accident. Jesus would have us to know that, just as God has a plan, so also does Satan. In the parable of the tares, we learn of Satan's plan to hinder God's purpose by sowing false teaching in the world.

The parable of the tares tells of a man who planted good seed in his field, "*but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way*" (Mt. 13:25). Tares are plants that closely resemble wheat in appearance, yet their mature seeds are noxious to man. Thus, you can see the awful damage caused by this clandestine activity. It is not difficult to see the parallel to Satan's work in the spiritual realm:

1. He always tries to defeat the purposes of God (2 Pet. 2:1-3).
2. False teachers and evil workers do their work secretly, often doing their damage while others "sleep," unaware of the danger.
3. Sinful activities do not always appear evil until the fruit has reached maturity. That's why we must constantly stress basic truths and essential principles from God's Word.
4. Our responsibility is to watch, and "*try the spirits*" (1 Jn. 4:1), so that we will not fall victim to Satan's plan.

Yes, Satan has a plan, too! Be careful!