

Trends

A recent survey shows that only 5% of the United States population gives as much as 10% of their annual income to a church or non-profit organization. In fact, most self-identified Christians today give an average of 2.5% of their salary to a church or to a non-profit organization. That amount is significantly down from a 3.3% average that was given by Christians during the Great Depression.

- via The Barna Group

1 Corinthians 9:7: "Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver."

Sentence Sermons

"We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give."

—Winston Churchill

Acts 20:35: "I have shewed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'"

News & Notes

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.

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

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

John 6:68



June 30,
2019

Vol. 11,
No. 23

How Pitiful

Craig Thomas

On June 26, 2018 I found this news story on the Fox News website:

NJ man dies week after taking final trip to casino

A terminally ill New Jersey man who fulfilled one of his last wishes by making a trip to his favorite Atlantic City casino last week has died.

John Mudry died Monday at a nursing home in Toms River. Family members say he had been diagnosed with a rare form of non-treatable bladder cancer.

Mudry's death came nearly a week after he and his family visited Bally's Atlantic City so the 71-year-old retired Teamster could drink a cold beer and play a few hands of blackjack.

Mudry made the trip with help from his hospice caretakers and health care providers. He ended up winning a few hundred dollars.

All that I could think of after reading this story is "How pitiful!" The book of Job tells us God gives every man life (Job 33:4: "The Spirit of God has made me, and the breath of the Almighty gives me life."). And, it is true, He allows us to use our lives as we see fit. However, there are consequences for that choice: temporal and eternal consequences.

Can you imagine facing the Lord on the Day of Judgment with the pinnacle of your life's desire being one final trip to a casino to "drink a cold beer and play a few hands of blackjack"? The final acts of your pilgrimage here in this life to engage in purely carnal pleasures?!

Some of the most profound words in the Bible are found in Matthew 16:26:

"For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?"

Evidently Mr. Mudry didn't understand that important concept. Do you? You and I may be totally unaware of the fact we may be living the last few days of your earthly lives right now TODAY. When death overtakes you do you sup-

pose you will be glad you spent your final moments pursuing carnal pleasures as Mr. Mudry or faithfully serving the Lord? The Lord will not grant us any “do overs.” *“See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil.”* (Eph. 5:15-16)

Shame and Blush

Larry Ray Hafley

“Were they ashamed when they had committed abomination? Nay, they were not at all ashamed, neither could they blush” (Jer. 6:15). Whenever God’s people lost their sense of shame and the ability to blush, they were condemned to fall. The same is true today.

Shame has been replaced by, “When you’ve got it, flaunt it.” One who blushes is mocked and scorned as a Puritan prude. The shameless soul is led by an impenetrable, impregnable heart. His *“conscience is seared with a hot iron”* (1 Tim. 4:2). *“Even their mind and conscience is defiled...being abominable, and disobedient”* (Titus 1:15, 16).

Shame is a gate, a restraint, and to blush is to protest impropriety and profanity, whether it be of mind, body, or speech. Those who cannot blush know no law. The shameless are uninhibited. Unable to blush, they have no fence to contain lusts and passions. “A blush is a sign that nature hangs out to show where chastity and honor dwell.”

An individual who has no shame has no sense of personal pride, no sense of respect for the rights, duties, property, and privacy of others, and no sense of regard and concern for wisdom and experience. Thus, an individual who has no shame has no sense.

What Our Giving Says

Greg Gwin

It is clear that our giving to the Lord reflects our basic attitudes in several important ways. Consider ...

IF I GIVE NOTHING:

I’m really saying, “Let’s close the doors and disband the church”

I take a “free ride” based on what others have given.

WHEN I GIVE LESS THAN 10% OF MY INCOME:

I am doing less than was required of the poorest Jew under the Law of Moses.

I show that I do not appreciate the “better” blessings I enjoy in Christ Jesus (Hebrew 8:6).

IF I’M NOT GIVING MORE THAN I DID LAST YEAR:

I’m saying that I am not any better off financially than I was 12 months ago - no raise, no bonus, etc. Is this true?

Or is it a problem of priorities?

IF I GIVE, BUT DO SO GRUDGINGLY:

I miss out on the joy of giving.

I disappoint God, for He *“loves a cheerful giver”* (2 Cor. 9:7).

WHEN I DON’T “PURPOSE” WHAT I GIVE IN ADVANCE:

I’m not following God’s plan (2 Cor. 9:7).

I’m likely to take on obligations which will prevent me from giving as I should.

I make it difficult for the church to have any long range program of work.

IF I DON’T GIVE PROPORTIONATELY AS I’VE PROSPERED:

I commit sin (1 Cor. 16:2).

I hinder the important work of the church.

I deprive myself of some of the satisfaction and fulfillment of being a faithful servant.

Time and Chance

Larry Hafley

There is such a thing as “good luck,” or “being in the right place at the right time.” The reverse is equally true. How do I know? The Bible teaches it.

“I returned, and saw under the sun, that the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, neither yet bread to the wise, nor yet riches to men of understanding, nor yet favor to men of skill: but time and chance happeneth to them all” (Eccl. 9:11).

“There is a just man the perisheth in his righteousness, and here is a wicked man that longeth his life in his wickedness” (Eccl. 7:15). *“There are righteous men to whom it happens according to the deeds of the wicked. On the other hand, there are evil men to who it happens according to the deeds of the righteous”* (Eccl. 8:14).

We should not allow these exceptions to validate excuses for not striving for gain and growth. We should not cite such verses to justify laziness and apathy while waiting for our “ship to come in.” (If your ship were to come in, it would need a harbor, a pier. Better get busy!)

Generally, as the Wise man said, *“He becometh poor that dealeth with a slack hand, but the hand of the diligent maketh rich”* (Prov. 10:4). Let us labor with

that hope without tying our soul’s salvation to the outcome, whether good or bad, whether rich or poor (Matt. 6:33; Mk. 4:19).

“But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.”

Matthew 6:33