

May 31, 2015

# *Insight...*

***“God chose you from the beginning to be saved through sanctification by the Spirit.”  
2 Thessalonians 2:13***

- The ministry can be very demanding and the hours irregular. As a result, over the years, from time to time, pastors are caught sleeping on the job. The excuses vary. Here are a few...
  - ...*“They told me down at the blood bank this might happen.”*
  - ...*“Whew! Guess I left the top off the liquid paper. You probably got here just in time!”*
  - ...*“I was testing my keyboard for drool resistance.”*
  - ...*“Interruptions, interruptions! Now I’ve got to try to reach that same level of concentration again.”*
  - ...*“Someone must’ve put decaf in the wrong pot.”*
  
- **According to...** a recent survey by the Pew Research Center - *“The Christian share of the U.S. population is declining, while the number of U.S. adults who do not identify with an organized religion is growing.”* More specifically, seventy-one percent of Americans identify themselves as Christians, down from 79 percent in 2007.
  
- **Among those are those self-identifying as religious, but unaffiliated**, the biggest increase and the subject of much of the media coverage this survey generated was a group sociologists are currently identifying as the “nones.” They went from 16 percent of those surveyed in 2007 to 23 percent today. And among 18-to-25-year olds, the percentage of the unaffiliated rose to 34 percent.
  
- **The New York Times**...didn’t hesitate to weigh in on the reason for the decline. Clearly, they claimed, part of the reason is the *“politicalization of religion by American conservatives.”* The one outside expert quoted in the piece reinforced the notion of a *“backlash against the association of Christianity with conservative political values.”*
  
- **But Note:** This so-called explanation ignores the inconvenient fact that the biggest decline noted, again, is in the liberal mainline denominations.
  
- **One response from the Gospel Coalition**...Joe Carter pointed out that the *“Christianity in decline”* meme ignores the fact that, according to the survey, the number of Evangelicals is growing, and the percentage of Americans who describe themselves as such remains stable.

- **Yep...more statistics shared ta scare ya...** or at least to get our attention. Concerning family meals...according to the American College of Pediatrics, here are some of the risks for teenagers who have fewer than three meals per week with their family:
  - ...They are 2 ½ times more likely to use marijuana.
  - ...Their risk for using alcohol doubles.
  - ...The likelihood of their using tobacco increases 4 fold.
  - ...Are more likely to engage in sexual activity.
  - ...Are more likely to experience depression and other emotional problems.
  
- **Nothing new under the sun...** *"The democracy will cease to exist when you take away from those who are willing to work and give to those who would not."* Thomas Jefferson
  
- **Trivia Question:** What are the most often stated reasons, given by families, explaining why they do not eat meals together?
 

A. Conflicting parental schedules.	C. Pulling kids away from smartphones.
B. Pulling kids away from televisions.	D. All of the above...

### For Prayer...

- ...Sharing Dave's joy after his missing son, Timothy, was found in a facility in the Milwaukee area. We pray for Tim's salvation and healing.
- ...Our graduates (all levels) and their end of the year activities: baccalaureates, graduations, open houses, jobs, ministries, etc.
- ...Tom (Barb) – home from the hospital but not doing well. Legs still not working well.
- ...Steve (June) – his back is doing better and he is working. It is still very hard for him to sit.
- ...We mourn with Shirley and her family after the death of her husband Bruce. Services were last Wednesday.
- ...Todd's cousin, Mark, whose semi was struck by a woman in his own church. She did not survive the accident, he is struggling spiritually and emotionally.
- ...Chuck (Esther) – Chuck is back in the hospital. He has not bounced back after suffering a heart attack a couple of weeks ago. Please pray for Chuck and his family.
- ...Continued prayer for Bernard, Mark's father, as he battles terminal cancer. He is now under hospice care.
- ...Ken (Judy) – is home and was in church last week. Total healing is our desire and certain areas are coming more slowly than others. Praying for healing and patience.
- ...Please pray for Wayne and Missy who are struggling greatly with serious life issues. We pray or the Lord's will to be done and strength of faith for Wayne and Missy.
- ...Space Planning & Church growth.
- ...VBS Committee – workers, preparation and kids to bring kids.
- ...Couples who are fighting serious physical illness together:
 

Jeff & Laurie	Christy (Mike)	Sue (John)
Norm & Peg	Cheryl (Deane)	Ken (Judy) l
- ...Our Expectant Mothers:
 

Sarah (Kelly)	Britta (Jonah)	Diana (Steven)
Brittany (Andy)	Jen (Cody)	
Chante (Brent)	Kristin (Shawn)	
- ...We are rejoicing in the birth of Nathaniel Micah to Sarah and Beaner!

**Trivia Answer:** D. All of the above.

*It is hard to have patience with people who say There is no death or Death doesn't matter. There is death. And whatever is matters. And whatever happens has consequences, and it and they are irrevocable and irreversible. You might as well say that birth doesn't matter.*

*C. S. Lewis*