

FORMATION • COUNSELING • CHRISTIAN LIVING

Blessings and Pitfalls of Social Media



By Paul Chappell

Witnessing – Mark 16:15, “And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.”

Teaching Biblical Principles – 2 Timothy 2:2, “And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.”

Communicating with Friends and Co-laborers

Encouraging Others – Ephesians 4:29, “Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.”

Receiving Prayer Updates – This is one of the most valuable aspects that I have seen with Twitter so far.

Sharing Events with Relatives across the Country and around the World

Learning How God Is Blessing in Other Places – It is a blessing to see how God is working in so many different ministries. I want to rejoice with other Christians when they see a spiritual victory.

Burdens & Pitfalls of Social Networking

The Scheduling Burden— We are busy as it is. Adding social media might be sinful if you are robbing from God's time or family time... or even work time.

Focus on Self - People who are heavily involved in social networking are often preoccupied with what they are going to say about themselves online. There is a danger that narcissistic tendencies are elevated in the life of a person who feels compelled to tell others about themselves continually. Mark 8:34, "And when he had called the people unto him with his disciples also, he said unto them, Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me."

From the Weekly Standard: "Another longtime friend tells me he has 3,200 Facebook friends: 'I know maybe 50 of them.' Facebook is a place that turns adults into teenage girls. 'Instead of making things,' he says, 'We're telling people how great Gossip Girl is. Would your grandfather go on Facebook? Probably not. I think we've become a country thirsting for attention. Facebook is basically Googling yourself for people who don't have enough hits to warrant it.' It's all pointless."—Weekly Standard, March 2009.

Concern about Your "Larger Audience" as Opposed to the "Audience of One" - Scripture tells us that in all things we are to please Christ, but there is a growing tendency to be concerned about "followers" more than there is concern about following Him.

Time Wasting - Ephesians 5:16, "Redeeming the time, because the days are evil."

Communication Interruptions - I have seen parents—who have been extremely upset with their children for compulsive texting—act just as obsessive with Twitter and Facebook.

Bragging - Bloggers and twitterers need to be careful about feeling pressure to act as though their families and personal lives are perfect. 1 Peter 5:5, "...be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble."

Materialism -Many bloggers and twitterers focus on name brands and personal experiences to elevate materialism over stewardship.

Pressure to Sound Like an Expert -It seems like everyone on the Internet is accepted as an expert. I think we may be shocked if we saw the personal, family, and ministry lives of those we follow on the Internet.

Lack of Christ-centered Discussion -Colossians 1:18, "And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence." All things includes web things.

The Permanency of Remarks on the Internet

Gossip - 3 John 11, "Beloved, follow not that which is evil, but that which is good. He that doeth good is of God: but he that doeth evil hath not seen God."

THINK before Communicating

Is it True?

Is it Helpful?

Is it Inspiring?

Is it Necessary?

Is it Kind?

1 Thessalonians 5:15, "See that none render evil for evil unto any man; but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves, and to all men."

Potential for Improper Male/Female Relationships - "They then have access to each other's web pages, and consequently to each other's lives, quirks, photos, jottings, oversharing, and mental disorders, as well as to those ever-expanding universe of their friend's circles, thus increasing the likelihood that you will either embarrass yourself or be embarrassed by someone whose life would never otherwise intersect with yours."—The Weekly Standard, March 2009

Following the Wrong Crowd - I wonder if some twitterers would want to be listed as a "follower" of the people they are currently following. Biblical principles concerning those who influence us are still relevant to the Internet. Psalm 1:1, "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful." Amos 3:3, "Can two walk together, except they be agreed?"

Virtual Philosophy Becomes Virtual Reality - Young men play computer games such as Grand Theft Auto, and the results are the increase of violence in our society. Adults who follow wrong influences on the Internet will find Internet associations to be just as influential in their lives. Proverbs 23:7, "For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he: Eat and drink, saith he to thee; but his heart is not with thee."

Spiritual Admonitions for Social Media

Blog and Twitter Humbly

Deflect Praise to God - 1 Corinthians 10:31, "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God."

Don't Let Your Virtual Ministry Replace Your People Ministry

At Church

At Home

Don't Let Your Virtual Ministry Replace Your Local Church Ministry - Hebrews 10:25, "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching."

Beware of the "Marketing of Self" - Proverbs 27:2, "Let another man praise thee, and not thine own mouth; a stranger, and not thine own lips."

Avoid Every Appearance of Evil - 1 Thessalonians 5:22, "Abstain from all appearance of evil."

Beware Lest the Web become a Stronghold in Your Life - 1 Corinthians 6:12, "All things are lawful for me," but not all things are helpful. "All things are lawful for me," but I will not be dominated by anything."

I am sure more could be said on this subject and, no doubt, more will need to be said as the Internet continues to become a greater part of our lives. May we endeavor to walk in the Spirit and apply biblical principles as we use technology to glorify Him.