

The Right Use of Social Media

Are you an active user of social media? If so, you are not alone. Over 2 billion people in the world use social media. Facebook is the most popular social media site. Currently, there are 1.8 billion active users of Facebook (that is about a fourth of the world's population!). Social media has certainly taken the world by storm. But like with everything else in life, it too can become a corrupted tool of Satan.

This is why it is extremely important that we use social media in an appropriate and righteous way. Like with any device or medium, God has expectations for how to use it. While there is no sin in having a social media account(s), if we are not careful, social media can be an avenue we use to sin.

Here is a list of questions we need to ask ourselves before posting something on Facebook, tweeting something on Twitter, or putting a picture on Instagram.

- **Is what I am about to put out, going to cause unnecessary strife and division?** This is something that goes on far too much on social media (especially Facebook), and it can become very discouraging to all parties involved. Disciples of Jesus are peaceful people (Romans 12:18; 14:19). Instead of falling into the trap of getting into heated debates about politics and court decisions on social media, we need to use it to point people to the Bible and unite them for the cause of Christ. 2 Timothy 2:24 is a good verse to always keep in mind before posting anything.
- **Is what I am about to put out, going to create fertile soil for adultery?** Unfortunately, many people are using social media to reconnect with their old boyfriends and girlfriends from high school or college (which in some cases has led to many affairs and divorces). This is not the will of God! God desires that the marriage bed be sexually pure (Hebrews 13:4). He wants us to have strong, healthy marriages that last a lifetime (Matthew 19:6). My wife and I have some rules for each other when it comes to this: we never send or accept friend requests from people we were in past relationships with. We also give one another complete access to each other's social media accounts. We do these things to give Satan no opportunity to destroy our marriage. We want our hearts to only long to be with one another.
- **Does this post include immodest pictures, filthy language, and gossip?** God's people are to strive to be holy (1 Peter 1:15-16). They are to strive to be holy in their words (Ephesians 4:29; Colossians 4:6), in the way that they dress (1 Timothy 2:9-10), and they are to avoid gossip (Proverbs 20:19). They are to make sure that their claim to be Christians lines up with the pictures they post and the comments they write on social media.
- **How much of my time is being consumed by doing this?** Did you know that over 700 billion minutes a month are spent on Facebook? Add to that the fact that in just 20 minutes on Facebook, over 1 million links are shared, 2 million friend requests are accepted, and almost 3 million messages are sent. How often are you on Facebook or other social media sites? If you are not careful, you can find yourself on them way more than you should be. You can find yourself

neglecting Bible study, prayer, and meditating on the mercy and love of God. If you find yourself logging onto social media multiple times throughout the day, it is time to admit that you have a problem (maybe even an addiction), and then start working diligently to correct it. It is time to start being a better steward of your time (Ephesians 5:15-17). Start putting some reasonable limits on how much time you will spend on social media each day. Challenge yourself to carve out time each day to absorb your mind in the Bible and communicate with God through prayer. Make sure that you spend quality time with your family each day. Go outside and play with your kids. Talk to your family. Do fun things together. Don't let social media absorb all your time and render each day fruitless.

Again, there is nothing wrong with having a social media account. Just make sure you use it to glorify God and cause others to do the same (Matthew 5:16). Understand that how you behave on social media can either damage or exalt our influence before others. Like many other things in this life, God expects us to use good judgment and exercise discipline in our use of this far-reaching medium.