**Social Media Use (for Adults), Part 1**

2Timothy 3:1-5 says that in *“the last days,”* among other things, people will be *“lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, unloving, irreconcilable, malicious gossips, without self-control, brutal, haters of good, treacherous, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God; holding to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power; and avoid such men as these.”* Think carefully about this list and answer one question: Which of these behaviors and descriptions have you NOT seen demonstrated in abundance on **social media**?

Now before you get ahead of me, realize that the “media”(the plural form of the noun *medium*) is NOT the problem, the “SOCIAL” is. The medium (means of mass communication) happens to be *electronic,* but the same problems have existed before, and do exist now, in other media. Have not ALL of those disgraceful behaviors from 2Tim.3:2-5 likewise been manifested in “print” media like books, magazines, newspapers, etc.? Have not radio airwaves been (and still are) used to propagate all the bad attitudes and evil behaviors listed in our passage? Surely we must acknowledge that the “visual” media of television, movies, news, and videos of all sorts likewise demonstrate (and promote) all the same sinful attitudes and behaviors. While we’re at it, have they not all been manifested in *how* people speak (*verbal* media) to and *socialize* with one another?

So I repeat, the “media” part is not the problem, the “social” part is. People have been *arrogant, boastful, gossiping, lovers of self* who *brutalize* and *abuse* one another and promote *ungodliness* throughout time and through every form of “media” available to them. And some of them have proclaimed their *godliness* while *denying its power* through their attitudes and actions for just as long. The truth is that *“the last days”* of which Paul wrote to Timothy began some 2000 years ago. “Social media” did not invent *ungodliness*. Think further with me on this…

“Social” refers to people communicating and interacting with other people. The “media” by which this interaction is accomplished today happens is more and more often electronic (via devices such as computers, phones, tablets, etc.). But as we’ve seen above, other forms of “media” can be and have been used to promote or display *“last days” evil.*

So, how should we deal with the *evil* that is stimulated through *social media?*  Consider how have we dealt with *evil* that has been/is stimulated through the *various other forms of media…*

* Did we ban and burn all books and other forms of ***print***media? Or did we instead find and read *good* books, magazines, and other forms of *good* print media, and eliminate the bad ones, at least for ourselves?
* Did we get rid of our radios and all forms of***audio***media? Or did we likewise “tune in” to good and “tune out” bad *audio* media?
* Did we do away with television and all forms of ***visual***media completely? Or did we likewise search for and utilize *good* *television, film,* and *visual* media while shunning the bad versions of the same?

Just like in these other *forms of media,* we can find and read, listen, and watch good social media and eliminate bad *social* media as well, Rom.12:9b. But as with the other *forms*, it takes thoughtful and deliberate consideration and vigilant effort, Heb.5:14. You can easily “unfollow” (eliminate so that you don’t see what they post) anyone or any site that uses bad language in *print* or *audio* form, or displays bad pictures, videos, or other *visual* images so as to eliminate anyone or any site that promotes *ungodliness.* But you must be proactive in these regards. Sound familiar? Haven’t we heard (or said) the same thing about ALL these other *forms of media?*

It could even be argued that it is easier to “control your environment” on *social media* than it is in the “real world.” Of course, *“bad company* (NASV, or *communications,* KJV) *corrupts good morals”* on *social media* platforms also, cf.1Corinthians 15:33. But with *social media,* you can control your exposure to *ungodliness* in ways that are not always possible otherwise. On *electronic* *media* you get to choose with whomyou “socialize.” You can allow *everyone* and *everything* in, or you select the *good* and eliminate the *bad.* In life, surely we do this with *print, visual,* and *audio* media already. And I certainly hope we do it for the *people* with whom we “socialize” whether in person or through electronic media, Prov.13:20!

“Yes,” I *use* *social media-* primarily Facebook. I *use it* for **input** to:

* Keep in touch with family members, friends, and brethren (both local and otherwise), Rom.12:10-13;
* To be able know and interact with others about events in their lives, both positive and negative, Rom.12:15;
* For entertainment; many things on social media make me laugh and brighten my day, Prov.17:22;
* For information; to learn about things that interest me in the *spiritual,* Eph.5:10; Prov.27:17,and more *natural* realms, Prov.1:1-7; Psa.19:1-6;
* To learn about *people* and their *problems;* to be *spiritually helpful,* I need to be a good student of both- as I must be of the Word and its *solutions,* cp. John 2:24-25.

I also use *social media* for **output**:

* I can potentially educate, edify, and encourage hundreds if not thousands of people *spiritually* with just a few “clicks” in just a few moments each day. I have *electronically* sent study materials to South America, China, Africa, the Philippines, and all over the U.S. How many people can I personally speak to “face-to-face” with a spiritual message in one day? How many can I call on the phone in one day? To how many can I write a “snail mail” letter in one day? (Radio and television media are costly both for required equipment and airtime, but I already have a computer and Wi-Fi!)
* How many people can I “check in with” or “interact with” just to see how they’re doing or to see what’s going on in their world through other *forms* of media?
* How many people can I reach with a personal prayer request or one on behalf of a friend, family or church member through other *forms* of media? Depending on *social media* “friend list,” such can be done to hundreds and even thousands of Christian friends in a moment and continues to do so for days, Jas.5:16.

**But I try to *use* social media rather than allowing it to *use* me** (more on this in the next lesson- *social media* has its “demons” also!)**.**

**Conclusion:**

1. **Social Media is *no better* or *no worse* than the people who use it.**
2. **As in all aspects of life and *socializing* in it, we must be vigilant with whom we choose to “socialize.”**
3. **Like all other forms to *media,* it can be used in good ways for good purposes, or vice versa.**