**Social Media Use (for Adults), Part 2**

Social media can be used *positively,* and has *benefits.* But as was stated in Part 1, this is so when/if **we** ***use it***thoughtfully with deliberate consideration and vigilant effort. We must also be *discerning* of *good* and *evil,* and *discriminating* (*abhor evil, clinging to good,* Rom.12:9b). But what we must not do is to **allow *social media to use us****,* cf. Rom.6:16-18. We can easily wind up *being led/influenced* away from faith rather than *leading others* to it.And **social media will *use us*** (especially if we’re *naively ignorant* or *weak in faith*) **to:**

* **Multiply Misinformation-** to spread false narratives and outright lies (both unintentional and deliberate), cf. Phil.4:8a; Eph.4:25;
* **Spread Gossip-** both by *taking it in* and *putting it out/passing it on;* Rom.1:29 and 2Tim.3:3 include *gossip* right along with other *evils* regardless of how we may dismiss it; and,
* **Promote the *Unwholesome-*** those professing faith in Christ not only have no business *listening to, originating,* or *passing on* that which is *“not fitting”* (cf. Eph.5:4), *unwholesome* or *unkind* (Eph.4:29-32), or lacks *grace* (Col.4:6).

I try not to let social media *use me* to multiply misinformation or spread false narratives and outright lies. The old “grapevine” of gossip has no more potent modern ally than social media. And certainly, there is much that is *unwholesome* on social media- especially if you don’t discriminate *who* and *what* you allow in your “feed/stream.” These things will *stream* into your mind and *feed* your heart if you let them! Use social media for *good,* and don’t let it use you for *evil!*

But there are some other **dangers** either *inherent in* or *promoted by* social media. Consider that **social media also seems to** **encourage:**

* **A/V/Phone Addiction-** Please at least turn off “notifications” and check your account when *you* are ALONE rather than allowing it to constantly interrupt face-to-face contact and conversation with present people! Just because it rings, chimes, dings, vibrates, or does whatever you have it set to do doesn’t mean you have to “get” or “check” it. Present people take precedence, please! (cf. Phil.2:2-3)
* **Self-Promotion-** We can easily become *addicted slaves* to *likes, shares, comments,* and *retweets!* And in so-doing, can become a people-pleasers, or at least an Internet version of such. Your self-esteem should come from *within* because of what you are *in Christ* (1John 3:21-22)*,* not from *without* because of your “popularity” with the social media world, cf. Jas.4:4 and Luke 6:26a.
* **False Self-Images-** Be honest: does your “profile pic” really look like you, or has it been “digitally re-mastered” through the wonders of *filters* and *Photoshop?* Likewise, does how you describe and talk about yourself, your life, and your etc. reflect *reality,* or merely a *virtual* reality that only exists online? Isn’t *pretending to be something that you’re not* also known as “hypocrisy” (cf. Matt.7:1-5)? Some have “edited” their online pics and profiles so much for so long to create a different “image” online that they actually become *deluded* about who they are in the real world, cp.Jas.1:22ff.
* **Prideful Boasting-**  Social media easily and often becomes a competition to see who can “post” (whether real or *enhanced*) the **best** *boyfriend/girlfriend, spouse, family/children, vacation, home décor, vehicle, ad infinitum!* Or, it can become inversely competitive regarding the **worst** *service at restaurant, illness, life in general, etc.*  We do this, don’t we? But why do we? It’s not just a competitive spirit, it is also boastful arrogance, 2Tim.3:2.

And on a somewhat related point, social media also seems to encourage *flattery-*  I mean some of us are just begging for compliments whether we deserve them or not, and some of our “friends” will surely oblige whether they mean them or not, Jude 16!

* (for lack of better terminology) **The Worst in Us-**  Perhaps because the ease and rapidity with which we can respond on social media, it seems to promote *sarcasm, harshness, hypercriticism, negativity, cynicism, derision, scorn,* and general *disdain!* Why? Though it is unpleasant to hear, social media does not actually cause or **produce** these things in us, it simply **manifests** them, cf. Luke 6:43-45! But unfortunately, social media displays these *evil traits* to the world in ways that cannot be *undone,* only *overcome* by repentance.
* **Misunderstanding-**  Whether it’s a *text,* or a “posted” message or picture (an energy drink can looks much like a beer can), we’ve apparently become experts at misunderstanding. There are several reasons for this “failure to communicate”: *practical illiteracy* (few can actually express themselves accurately with words anymore- especially if we have to spell them!); *the lack of non-verbal clues* inherent with “typed”rather than “face-to-face”conversations; and we’ve become Olympians at *jumping to conclusions.*
* **Reclusive Anonymity-** While social media does allow one to become somewhat or altogether *reclusive,* remember how God created us, and what He said about us (both sexes) in Gen.1:18. He made us to be inter-dependent and social beings. In fact, your Christian duties require you to be the opposite of *reclusive.* How can one fulfill his divinely-inspired obligations to *assemble* and *collectively worship* with*,* and *encourage* and *stimulate one another* otherwise, Heb.10:24-25? Likewise, please don’t attempt to *reclusively* attempt to *reprove in private* via text or social media message a *brother who sins* (against *you* or *anyone* else) rather than doing it face-to-face, Matt.18:15ff!

But, social media does not provide *anonymity.* Oh sure, you can withhold or give a false name and picture, but your posts and comments assuredly reveal you to the world! Your thoughts, emotions, biases, loves, hates, prejudices, and proclivities are there for everyone who looks to see- both *good* and *bad.*

**Conclusions:**

1. **Social media can be a tremendous “tool” for either *education and encouragement,* or *misinformation/misunderstanding and discouragement.* Use it *wisely,* with *wisdom, discretion, grace, kindness,* and *love,* 1Thess.5:11!**
2. **Never *text, tweet, message,* or *post* anything “privately” that you wouldn’t say *publicly* and *face-to-face.* Once you do so, what you meant to be “private” can easily become “public”- and probably will do just that.**
3. **You are presenting yourself and your view of everything through the use of social media. Be sure it is the “image” you ought to be portraying, Eph.5:1-2.**