

Rules and Warnings for Social Networking

INTRODUCTION.

- A. While the term social networking may seem like a new term, the meaning behind it has been around for a number of years. Your social network is basically your family, your friends, and others with whom you interact on a social level.
- B. Since the advent of the Internet, our ability to network with our social contacts has changed greatly. Email and bulletin board systems brought with it the ability to communicate in ways that bypassed the postal services.
- C. Within the past ten years, services developed that allowed networking on a different level that included instant messaging services, person-to-person video conversations, etc.
- D. Within the past five years services have developed allowing instant posting of information. Twitter allows you to tell your two hundred followers that you have a headache. Facebook allows you to tell your four hundred friends that your dog just did his first trick, catching the bone. Facebook also allows you to post the fifty pictures you took of your dog doing the trick.
- E. Our younger generation is growing up, being exposed to this level of communication. The idea of networking with their friends with an immediate action and hearing of news as it immediately happens is common place in our society.
- F. With this lesson we will consider some basic rules and warnings to keep in mind when jumping into the world of electronic social networking.

I. RULES TO REMEMBER.

- A. Be swift to hear and slow to speak.
 - 1. Just like in casual conversation, think before your speak. (James 1:19, 26)
 - 2. The tongue (spoken word) contains great potential. (James 3:2-10)
 - 3. Consider the following quotes from the book of Proverbs:
 - a. *“In the multitude of words sin is not lacking, But he who restrains his lips is wise.”* (Proverbs 10:19)
 - b. *“The tongue of the wise uses knowledge rightly, But the mouth of fools pours forth foolishness.”* (Proverbs 15:2)

- c. *“Whoever guards his mouth and tongue keeps his soul from troubles.”*
(Proverbs 21:23)
 4. Ask yourself the following questions before sending out your next Twitter or Facebook update:
 - a. Can someone take your comment the wrong way?
 - b. Will your comments or statements offend another person?
 - c. Are you passing along information that is private or not intended for public knowledge?
 5. In short, think before you speak or type.
- B. Do not use your social networking services as an outlet for anger or emotional release.
 1. Remember that the *“wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God.”*
(James 1:19-20, 26)
 2. We are keep control of anger and our emotional outbursts. (Ephesians 4:26-27)
 3. Watch your language. (Ephesians 4:29; Colossians 3:8; Proverbs 15:4)
 4. Consider the follow guidelines:
 - a. Do not air your family problems over a public forum or even in private to individuals.
 - b. Do not air your complaints regarding your work or co-workers.
 - c. Do not complain about your friends.
 - d. Do not say anything of which you will later be ashamed once the emotions or the anger subsides.
- C. Do not lie.
 1. People may be tempted to embellish or fabricate the truth in their various statuses or Twitter updates. Such alterations of the truth may be attempts to improve a person’s public standing.
 2. A person may be tempted to lie or suggest a lie about another person.
 3. Anything stated, typed, or insinuated to be something other than the truth is a lie. Christians must avoid telling lies or practicing deception. (Ephesians 4:25; Colossians 3:9-10; cf. 1 Peter 3:10)
- D. Do not use your social networking services as a means of self-glorification or self-elevation.

1. The Pharisees prayed and fasted in ways to bring about their own self-glorification. (Matthew 6:5, 7, 16)
 2. We should not be concerned with our own glory. (Proverbs 25:27; 26:12)
- E. Do not allow yourself to be influenced by your social network.
1. Paul warned the church in Corinth that evil communications could corrupt good morals. (1 Corinthians 15:33)
 2. Paul told Timothy to shun profane and idle babblings. (2 Timothy 2:16-18)
 3. False teachers thrive within the world of social networking. (2 Peter 2:18-20)
 4. Beware of the following influences:
 - a. Worldly thoughts and ideas.
 - b. False teachings and doctrinal error.
 - c. Filthy language and dirty jokes.
 - d. Gossip about other people.
- F. Remember the potentially addictive nature of social networking services.
1. Paul makes the point that he would not be brought under the power of anything. (1 Corinthians 6:12)
 2. Many people have wasted far too much time in monitoring their social networks.
 - a. Checking your Facebook and your Twitter accounts can become addictive. What did so and so say? What are the comments about their post? Such questions can consume our time.
 - b. Monitor your social networks with moderation. Do not let it consume your time and your energies.
- G. Do not allow your social network to threaten your marriage.
1. The internet makes possible the reconnecting with old friends.
 2. However, it also allows reconnecting with old boyfriends and old girlfriends. While in a happy marriage, such occasional conversations may not seem threatening, there are times when the old flame may be lonely and seek to rekindle the spark. Reconnecting in a romantic way with an old flame may be the furthest thing from your mind, however, the old flame may think differently.
 3. For this point, I would like to recall Solomon's warnings to his sons about the immoral woman. (cf. Proverbs 7:5-27)

4. Consider Solomon's encouragement for the married couple. (Proverbs 5:15-21)
- H. Remember: Nothing is private in the world of social networking. This is especially true since God sees all. Solomon wrote, "*The eyes of the LORD are in every place, keeping watch on the evil and the good.*" (Proverbs 15:3)
- I. Use the tools of social networking in a positive and beneficial manner.
 1. Teach other's the gospel of Jesus Christ. (Mark 16:15-16)
 2. Use encouraging words. (Ephesians 4:29; Colossians 4:6)
 3. Pay attention to other people's conditions. There may be those who need you to prayer for them. (1 Timothy 2:1-2)
 4. Set a good example by letting your light shine before your social network. (Matthew 5:14-16)

CONCLUSION.

- A. Let us recap what we have learned in this lesson on social networking.
 1. Be swift to hear and slow to speak.
 2. Do not use your social networking services as an outlet for your anger or emotional release.
 3. Do not lie.
 4. Do not use your social networking services as a means of self-glorification or self-elevation.
 5. Do not allow yourself to be influenced by your social network.
 6. Remember the potentially addictive nature of the social networking services.
 7. Do not allow your social network to threaten your marriage.
 8. Remember: Nothing is private in the world of social networking.
 9. Use the tools of social networking in a positive and beneficial manner.
- B. While the rules and warnings may see excessive to some, all Christians must remember that these rules and warnings govern every day of our lives in every generation. Christians are to apply the Bible based principles in their dealings with any individual, whether it be in person, by letter, or by electronic means.

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by John M. Duvall – November 23 & 30, 2010 – File #: 1035

Show notes for the Scriptural Way Broadcast.