

SOCIAL NETWORKING AND SOUND DOCTRINE

What is social networking?

- Something that has existed since human beings started communicating in the Garden of Eden; it has grown with technology
- Social networking began with face to face conversation, progressed to writing, a reliable postal service, telegraph, telephone, email, bulletin board discussions, cell phones, texting, multimedia texting, blogging, MySpace, Pleonast, Facebook, and Twitter
- “A social network is a social structure made up of individuals (or organizations) called "nodes", which are tied (connected) by one or more specific types of interdependency, such as friendship, kinship, common interest, financial exchange, dislike, sexual relationships, or relationships of beliefs, knowledge or prestige.” (*Wikipedia*)

A few things are certain:

- It will continue to grow with the technology
- The rules of courteous behavior will not change
- Christians must conduct themselves as Christians regardless of the setting they are in
- God's will for Christians has not changed with the technology

Social networks are similar

- ① You construct a public profile outlining some info about yourself (hobbies, preferences, tastes, activities, etc.)
- ① You add “friends” with whom you share a connection who can see your posts, pictures, shared links, etc
- ① You view and interact with their list of “friends” and add them to yours.
- ① There is a constant running “chatter” of posts and updates that range from the silly and trivial to important news about loved ones.
- ① Conversations and discussions follow “threads” which can be informative or wander all over the map

People, not social networks, are good or bad

- ⦿ For good or ill, information and influence can travel across the globe in Nano-seconds and remains there forever
- ⦿ With care, it can be a pleasant and effective means of interacting and keeping involved in each other's lives.
- ⦿ But what happens when social networking clashes with sound doctrine?

Right regardless of the venue

- ◎ Thoughts: keep them clean
 - Phil. 4:8 - “Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy--meditate on these things.”
 - Prov. 4:23 - “Keep your heart with all diligence, For out of it spring the issues of life.”

Right regardless of the venue

- ◎ Words: keep them proper

- Eph. 4:29-32 - “Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers. 30 And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. 31 Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. 32 And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God in Christ forgave you.”
- Eph. 5:4 - “neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks.”

Right regardless of the venue

◎ Eyes: keep them guarded

- Matt. 6:22-23 - “The lamp of the body is the eye. If therefore your eye is good, your whole body will be full of light. 23 "But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in you is darkness, how great is that darkness!”
- Job 31:1 - “I have made a covenant with my eyes; Why then should I look upon a young woman?”
- Psalm 101:3 - “I will set nothing wicked before my eyes; I hate the work of those who fall away; It shall not cling to me.”

Right regardless of the venue

- ⦿ Activities: keep them holy

- Col. 3:17 - “And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.”

Right regardless of the venue

- ◎ Friends: keep them godly

- 1Cor. 15:33-34 - “Do not be deceived: Evil company corrupts good habits. 34 Awake to righteousness, and do not sin; for some do not have the knowledge of God. I speak this to your shame.”

Opportunities offered

◎ Evangelism

- Matt. 28:19-20 - “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age. Amen.”
- 2Tim. 2:2 - “And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.”

Opportunities offered

⦿ Encourage

- Heb. 3:12-14 - “Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God; 13 but exhort one another daily, while it is called “Today,” lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. 14 For we have become partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end”
- Rom. 12:15 - “Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep.”

Opportunities offered

⦿ Educate

- 2Tim. 2:24-26 - “And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient, 25 in humility correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth, 26 and that they may come to their senses and escape the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him to do his will.”

Dangers delineated

⦿ Wasted time

- Eph. 5:15-17 - “See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, 16 redeeming the time, because the days are evil. 17 Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is.”

Dangers delineated

◎ Wasted Speech

- James 3:2, 5-6 - “For we all stumble in many things. If anyone does not stumble in word, he is a perfect man, able also to bridle the whole body. 5 Even so the tongue is a little member and boasts great things. See how great a forest a little fire kindles! 6 And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity. The tongue is so set among our members that it defiles the whole body, and sets on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire by hell.”

Dangers delineated

⦿ Wasted Influence

- Phil. 2:14-15 - “Do all things without complaining and disputing, 15 that you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world”

Dangers delineated

⦿ Photo Foolishness

- 1Tim. 4:12 - “Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity.”

People, not social networks, are good or bad

- ⦿ This is not really about social networking; it is about how Christians conduct themselves in every place and at all times.
- ⦿ This is about keeping ourselves unspotted from the world and making the most of our opportunities.
- ⦿ Who you are on Sunday evening in services ought to be who you are on Sunday night on Facebook.

People, not social networks, are good or bad

- Rom. 13:12-14 - “The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light. 13 Let us walk properly, as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness, not in lewdness and lust, not in strife and envy. 14 But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts.”