

FACEBOOK MEETS GOD'S BOOK

A. Facebook is a social networking website
(Twitter, MySpace, Pleonast, Dating sites).

1. You construct a public profile outlining some personal information about yourself.
2. You add “friends” with whom you share a connection - who can see your posts, pictures & links to other sites.
3. You can view & interact with their “friends” & you can even add them to your own list.
4. There is a steady stream of posts & updates that range from the silly & trivial to the very important.
5. With great speed your information & influence, for good or bad, can travel across the world.

[Many of us have been introduced to Facebook, but what happens when Facebook faces-off with God's Book?

Actually, this lesson will apply to the way we use the Internet in general.

And even if you don't use the Internet, there will be some application in this lesson for you.

First, I'd like to propose some thoughts about who we ought to be as a people.]

I. SOME ABSOLUTES FOR CHRISTIANS

A. **Thoughts:** Virtuous & Praiseworthy (Phil 4:8).

Phil 4:8 – Finally, brethren, whatever things are *true, noble, just, pure, lovely, of good report, if there is any virtue & if there is anything praiseworthy* — meditate on these things.

1. In whatever we're doing our thoughts should be centered on those things that are morally excellent by God's standard.

B. **Words:** Good & Edifying (Eph 4:25-5:4).

Prov 15:23 – A man has joy by the answer of his mouth, & *a word spoken in due season, how good it is!* **24:26** – He who gives a right answer kisses the lips. **Ecc 12:10** – *The Preacher sought to find acceptable words*; & what was written was upright — words of truth.

Isa 50:4 – *The Lord God has given Me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him who is weary.* He awakens Me morning by morning, He awakens My ear to hear as the learned.

1. Our choice of words should have as their ultimate aim - to edify & impart grace (gift) to the hearers: draw them closer to God.

C. **Eyes:** Healthy & Guarded (Matt 6:22-23).

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!

1. The eyes are the window of the soul; what we look at will either bring darkness or evil into our souls – light or righteousness.

- a. *Job*: “I have made a covenant with my eyes [not to look upon a young woman]” (**Job 31:1**). *David*: “I will set no worthless thing before my eyes” (**Psa 101:3**).

D. **Actions:** Obedient & Holy (1 Pet 1:14-15).

1 Pet 1:14-15 – *as obedient children*, not conforming yourselves to the former lusts, as in your ignorance; 15 but as He who called you is holy, *you also be holy in all your conduct*,

1. In whatever we are doing we should be carrying out the “holy” commands of the Holy One who called us.

E. **Friends:** Righteous & Knowledgeable (1 Cor 15:33-34).

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

1. Paul was warning about the evil influences that false teachers could have on the church.

2. Today, false teachers don't have to leave their houses to lead Christians into sin.
3. Those who mislead Christians today will be those whom Christians have befriended in the new social networks.
4. Paul is warning us that our closest friends ought to be those who are right with God.

[Now let's look at two perspectives of social networking: the opportunities & the dangers.]

II. OPPORTUNITIES: SOCIAL NETWORKING

A. Evangelism (Matt 28:18-20; 2 Tim 2:2).

1. In the apostles' time, spreading the gospel (God's word; Biblical truth) required a whole lot of footwork & personal interaction.

2. But today, through the Internet, we can teach God's word world-wide in a matter of seconds, & never leave home (explain).

- a. I'm not saying that's always good; the "personal touch" is a very effective means of spreading the gospel.

[But many people today would rather have the *impersonal* than the *personal touch*; they would rather search out what they're interested in rather than have someone approach them – social networking gives them that option.]

3. I think we will find over time that the precious souls who desire the gospel don't always have access to computers, nor do they have the time to use them.

- a. So let's keep our eyes out for such people, & not get too wrapped up in evangelism via the Internet & social networks – *and yet they possess great potential for evangelism.*

B. Encourage (Heb 3:12-14).

Heb 3:12-13 – Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God; 13 but *exhort* [parakaleo: to call to one's side] *one another daily*, while it is called “Today,” lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.

1. Social networking sites offer Christians a means to encourage other Christians when they get discouraged or fearful.

[Now Facebook shouldn't become more important to us than the local church.]

2. But like email, telephones & cell phones they can put us in contact with people who need us – *therefore we should use these social networks to encourage godliness.*

C. Educate (2 Tim 2:24-26).

2 Tim 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.

1. To some extent we have a responsibility with regard to the communication that passes through our social networking page.
2. When statements are made that are wrong or inappropriate, we should address it.

[Sometimes a simple word of caution will suffice. At other times you may need to direct a person to the word of God or to an article or sermon that can help in their understanding. In extreme cases you may have to “defriend” a person.]

Often, it is better to discuss the matter in private correspondence.]

3. But just as in the course of everyday life, we will have occasions to instruct others through social networks – *at those times it is our duty to defend the truth & enlighten others with the Truth of God's Book.*

III. DANGERS

A. Time Wasted (Eph 5:15-17).

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.

1. Time spent on social networking sites is no different from time spent on the telephone, watching TV, working on hobbies, or playing sports, etc.
2. But when the time spent doing these things takes on the form of an addiction, it will rob you of the time that should be devoted to your family, your spiritual growth, your prayers & Bible study, & the Lord's church.

B. Words Wasted (Jas 3:2, 5-6).

Jas 3:2-6 – 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 & 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, & sets on fire the course of nature; & it is set on fire by hell.

1. Internet communication has a way of lowering our inhibitions, because we're not in the presence of the one we're talking to.
 - a. So people often say things they wouldn't dare say in the presence of others; they gossip, spread rumors & voice opinions that harm relationships.
2. A wasted word is a dangerous thing; the Lord tells us that He will bring up our "idle" words at the judgment day (Matt 12:36).

C. Influence Wasted (Phil 2:14-16).

Phil 2:14-16 – Do all things without complaining & disputing, 15 that you may *become blameless & harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked & perverse generation*, among whom you shine as lights in the world, 16 holding fast the word of life,

1. As far as I can tell, social networking can do one of three things to a person's influence.
 - a. It can be used as a social outlet for the worldly person ONE would like to be.
 - b. Or it can weaken us & turn us away from the truth & love of Christ.
 - c. Or it can give us an avenue to promote to the truth & love of Christ to others.
2. The type of influence that we wish to have in this world is up to us.
3. Paul commanded us to influence the world as blameless & harmless children of God.

[That's something to keep in mind as we use these social networks in the future.]

CLOSING

- This lesson is not just about social networking.
- This lesson is about ... how to keep ourselves unspotted from the world.
-the responsibility we have to teach God's word & to encourage others.
-how we ought to avoid those activities that waste time & effort that could be better spent for the Lord's work.
- We may think Facebook is a private playground, but in reality it is public domain fraught with many dangers.

Rom 13:11-14 – And do this, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed. 12 *The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, & let us put on the armor of light.* 13 Let us walk properly, as in the day, not in revelry & drunkenness, not in lewdness & lust, not in strife & envy. 14 But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, & make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts.

- Resource: Sermon by Zeke Flores evangelist Kiber Street church of Christ Angleton, TX.