

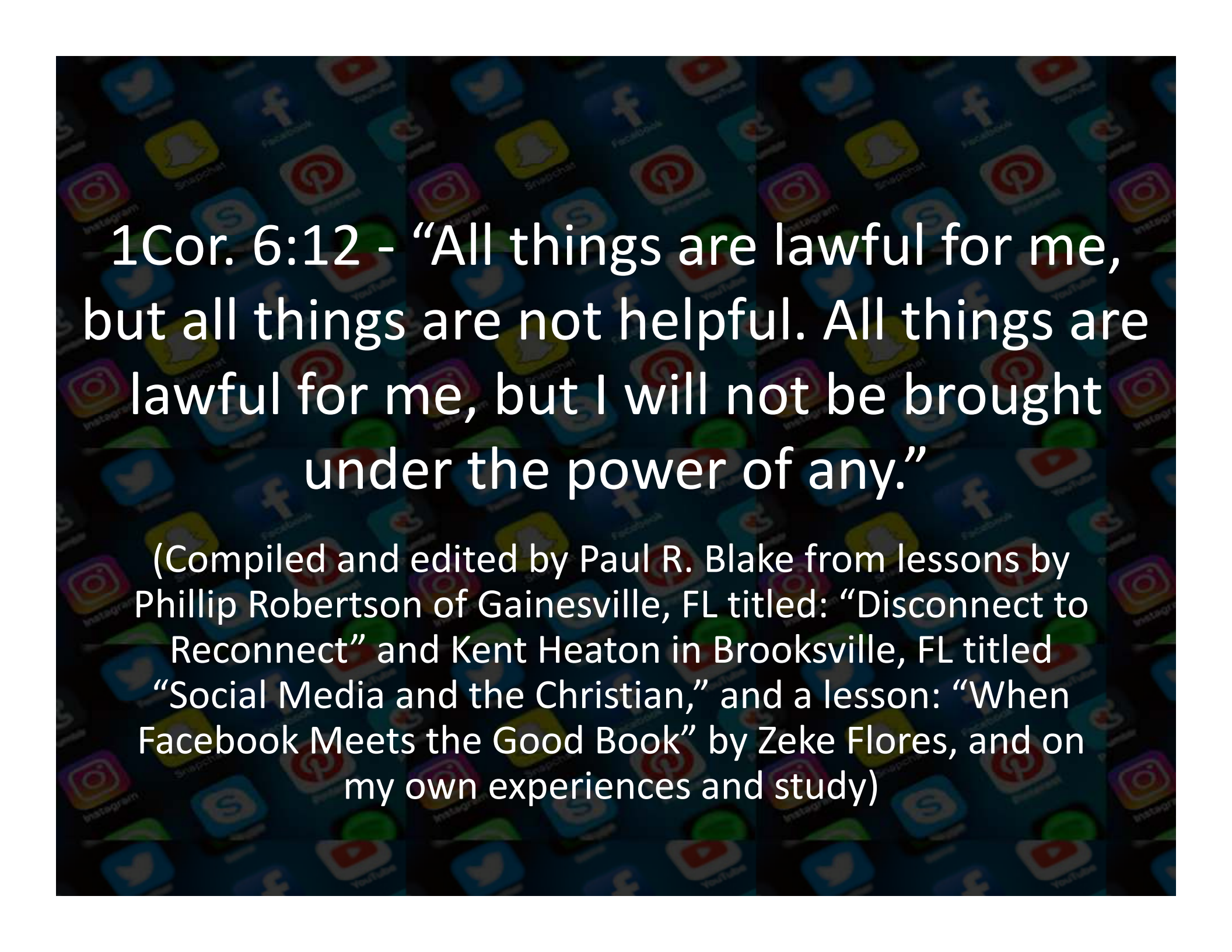


What Does the Bible Teach About Christians and Social Media?

Thursday Indepth Bible Class of the
Trilacoochee church of Christ

November 12, 2020

Part One



1Cor. 6:12 - “All things are lawful for me, but all things are not helpful. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any.”

(Compiled and edited by Paul R. Blake from lessons by Phillip Robertson of Gainesville, FL titled: “Disconnect to Reconnect” and Kent Heaton in Brooksville, FL titled “Social Media and the Christian,” and a lesson: “When Facebook Meets the Good Book” by Zeke Flores, and on my own experiences and study)

Interactive Part of the Class

- If you have a cell phone or a smart phone, please type “y.”
- If you have a Facebook account, please type “y.”
- If you have a Twitter, Snapchat, or other forms of social media, please type “y.”
- If you have used your smartphone, iPad or electronic device at the dinner table, please type “y.”
- If you have ever taken a selfie, please type “y.”
- If you have texted while driving, please type “y.”
- If you have ever used your smart phone or iPad for something other than a Bible program during worship services or Bible study – please DO NOT type “y.” – I really do not want to know how many of you are doing that.

Welcome to the Tech World!

- This is the world we now live in. It is not going to change back into the 1960s because we miss the old days or are afraid of the new times.
- Be clear about what I intend to do with this study. I am not advocating that technology is sinful; I am teaching that addiction to and misuse of technology is.

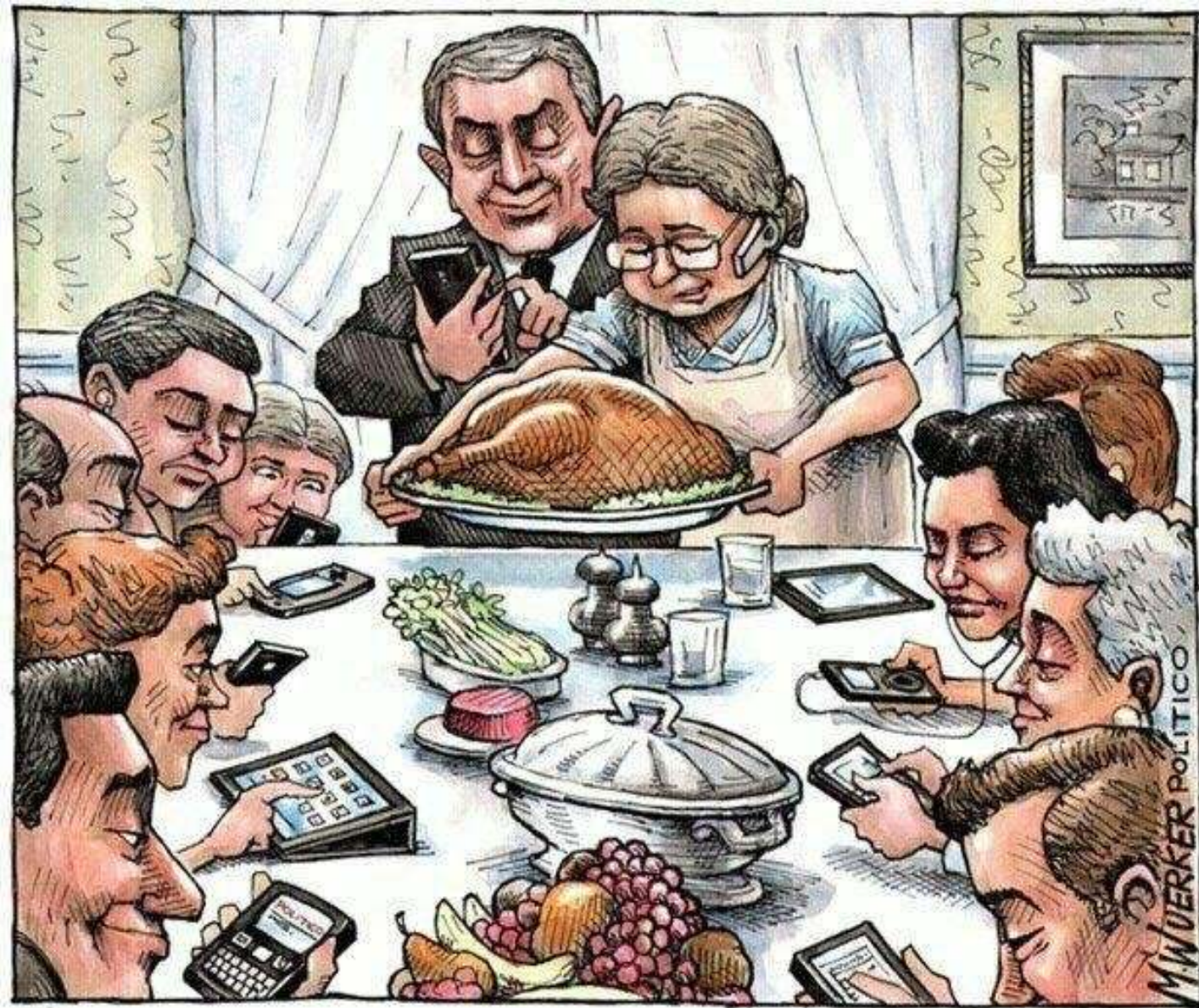
Our Addiction To Social Media



What Do You See?



What Do You See?



Social Media Consumes An Inordinate Amount Of Our Time And Energy

- The average American with a smartphone or mobile device will spend an average of more than four hours a day on their device.
- This comes to 28 hours per week or 120 hours a month or 1,460 hours per year. And, if one watches movies and TV on their phone, double that amount.
- College students will spend an average of 5 to 6 hours per day; over 40 hours per week and 1,800 hours per year.

Social Media Consumes An Inordinate Amount Of Our Time And Energy

- While on a smartphone, where does the average person spend the most time? Talking on the phone, playing video games, research on the Internet?
- 90% of adult activity is social media and entertainment.
- If this pattern continues, the average person will spend more than 12 years of their lives on mobile devices.

Social Media Consumes An Inordinate Amount Of Our Time And Energy



Social Media Consumes An Inordinate Amount Of Our Time And Energy

- We all struggle with our technology.
- “It’s the smartphone that has turned adults and children alike into tech-addicted zombies, dumbly swiping and jabbing at their screens, oblivious to the world around them. It’s the smartphone that has trapped people in this constant, hamster-wheel of updates and notifications and self-destructive comparisons with friends and celebrities, and the virtual demolition of any remaining barriers between work and personal life. It’s the smartphone that is responsible for one of the most depressing – and increasingly ubiquitous – sights of the modern age: a family sitting together but totally detached from one another, engaged with their screens rather than the people closest to them.” (Kent Heaton)

Social Media Consumes An Inordinate Amount Of Our Time And Energy

- Do not be like the man in Luke 18:10-14 -- “I am not like other men!”
 - “Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. 11 The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank You that I am not like other men--extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector. 12 I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I possess. 13 And the tax collector, standing afar off, would not so much as raise his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, God, be merciful to me a sinner! 14 I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.”

The Power Of Technology In Our Lives

- It is designed to be addictive.
 - Anonymous co-designer of the Apple iPhone 6
 - Tristan Harris worked for GOOGLE as a design ethicist.
- How do they make our phones addictive?

The Power Of Technology In Our Lives

- “Social media connects us to those far away but disconnects us from those next to us. On engagement, we’re already seeing that mobile users are more likely to be daily active users than desktop users. They’re more likely to use Facebook six or seven days of the week.” (*Mark Zuckerberg, Founder, Facebook*)
- “When you’ve got 5 minutes to fill, Twitter is a great way to fill 35 minutes.” (*Matt Cutts, software engineer and former head of Google’s web spam team*)
- “Don’t say anything online that you wouldn’t want plastered on a billboard with your face on it.” (*Erin Bury, Sprouter community manager*)
- “Privacy is dead, and social media holds the smoking gun.” (*Pete Cashmore, Mashable CEO*)

Why This Is Important

- We have an obligation as people of God to be wise and morally clean
 - Col. 4:5 - “Walk in wisdom toward those who are outside, redeeming the time.”
 - James 1:27 - “Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world.”

Why This Is Important

- To understand it is a matter of good and godly use of 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.”
- Our phones can become kleptomaniacs, thieves of time.

Why This Is Important

- To recognize the signs of addiction
 - 2Tim. 3:1-5 - “But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: 2 For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, 3 unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, 4 traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, 5 having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away!”

Why This Is Important

- How much has this taken over my life? How much has this become a necessary part of my mental state? What are the signs?
- Do you panic without it? Or when in a dead zone?
- Do you get phantom pulses?
- Do you have to check it late at night?
- Have you checked it in the last 20 minutes?
- Are you are on your phone while eating with others?
- Do you have text neck?
- Do you surf or text while driving?
- Have you answered a text or call while talking with someone in person?
- Has someone tried to talk with you about your smartphone habits?

Why This Is Important

- To avoid what is worthless
 - Psalm 101:1-7 - “I will sing of mercy and justice; To You, O LORD, I will sing praises. 2 I will behave wisely in a perfect way. Oh, when will You come to me? I will walk within my house with a perfect heart. 3 I will set nothing wicked before my eyes; I hate the work of those who fall away; It shall not cling to me. 4 A perverse heart shall depart from me; I will not know wickedness. 5 Whoever secretly slanders his neighbor, Him I will destroy; The one who has a haughty look and a proud heart, Him I will not endure. 6 My eyes shall be on the faithful of the land, That they may dwell with me; He who walks in a perfect way, He shall serve me. 7 He who works deceit shall not dwell within my house; He who tells lies shall not continue in my presence.”

Why This Is Important

- “You no longer need a good book, which he really likes, to keep him from his prayers or his work or his sleep; a column of advertisements in yesterday's paper will do. You can make him waste his time not only in conversation he enjoys with people whom he likes, but in conversations with those he cares nothing about on subjects that bore him. You can make him do nothing at all for long periods. You can keep him up late at night, not [partying], but staring at a dead fire in a cold room. All the healthy and outgoing activities which we want him to avoid can be inhibited and nothing given in return, so that at last he may say, as one of my own patients said on his arrival down here, ‘I now see that I spent most of my life in doing neither what I ought nor what I liked.’” (C. S. Lewis, *The Screwtape Letters*)

Why This Is Important

- To seek true and healthy communication
 - 2John 12 - “Having many things to write to you, I did not wish to do so with paper and ink; but I hope to come to you and speak face to face, that our joy may be full.”
 - 3John 14 - “But I hope to see you shortly, and we shall speak face to face. Peace to you. Our friends greet you. Greet the friends by name.”
- Reposting without verifying is a form of lying.
(What Does the Bible Teach About Christians and Conspiracy Theories? May 14, 2020)

Why This Is Important

- The only important connection we will make in this life is with Jesus Christ
 - Mark 6:34 - “And Jesus, when He came out, saw a great multitude and was moved with compassion for them, because they were like sheep not having a shepherd. So He began to teach them many things.”

Why This Is Important

- Christians must understand why this is important
 - 1Cor. 6:12 - “All things are lawful for me, but all things are not helpful. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any.”
 - Matt. 5:29-30 - “If your right eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and cast it from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell. 30 And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and cast it from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell.”
 - Matt. 16:26 - “For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?”

Why This Is Important

- What can we take home from this media storm, rather than self-righteously storming about the social media?
- It will not always be here. There will be another techno-fashion to take its place in a few years.
- We can use our technology for good purposes and glorify God in its use
 - Matt. 5:16 - “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.”

Lesson Two

- Genuine concerns regarding the use of social media: threats to personal moral purity
- Christian families in the age of social media
- Doing what is right regardless of the venue
- Opportunities offered to Christians by social media
- God's word overrules social media

1Peter 2:12

- “Live such good lives among the unbelievers that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day He visits us.” (NIV)



What Does the Bible Teach About Christians and Social Media?

Thursday Indepth Bible Class of the
Trilacoochee church of Christ
11/19/20 - Lesson Two, Conclusion

Last Week: Lesson One

- Social media consumes an inordinate amount of our time and energy
- The influence of technology in our lives
- Recognize the signs of social media addiction
- Avoid what is worthless
- Seek true and healthy communication

This Week: Conclusion

- Genuine concerns regarding the use of social media: threats to personal moral purity
- Christian families in the age of social media
- Doing what is right regardless of the venue
- Opportunities offered to Christians by social media
- God's word overrules social media

Genuine Concerns About Social Media

- Mark 6:34 - “And Jesus, when He came out, saw a great multitude and was moved with compassion for them, because they were like sheep not having a shepherd. So He began to teach them many things.”

Genuine Concerns About Social Media

- Why the concern?
- Addiction
 - 1Cor. 6:12 - “All things are lawful for me, but all things are not helpful. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any.”
- Personal, moral purity
 - James 1:27 - “Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world.”

Genuine Concerns About Social Media

- Moral purity and social media
 - Posting selfies or photos of family and friends in immodest clothing
 - Posting political rants or conspiracy theory nonsense
 - Posting suggestive, puerile humor; using un-Christlike speech
 - “Liking” the above when posted by others
 - “Friending” and “liking” the posts of clearly and openly immoral people
 - “Friending” and “liking” the posts of unrepentant and disciplined Christians

Genuine Concerns About Social Media

- Supporting or participating in the tantrums of the ungodly and erring when they whine about the Lord's Church and criticize the sound doctrine of Christ
- If we choose to “share” with the sinful in this world, we can expect to share an eternal destination with them in the life to come.

Genuine Concerns About Social Media

- What does the word of God say?
 - Matt. 6:19-21 - “Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; 20 but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. 21 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”

Genuine Concerns About Social Media

- Luke 8:4-15 - In the parable of the sower, there are only four types of hearts. You have one of those hearts. Your children will develop one of those hearts.
 - Note the third soil - v. 14 - “Now the ones that fell among thorns are those who, when they have heard, go out and are choked with cares, riches, and pleasures of life, and bring no fruit to maturity”

Genuine Concerns About Social Media

- Daily usage can create self-imposed problems:
 - Anxiety -- feeling nervous and apprehensive
 - Mood swings -- if you are away from it for long, you begin having withdrawal symptoms
 - Isolation -- facilitates estranging one from those near him so that he can connect with others at a distance
 - Reduction in ability to talk with others -- loss of ability to empathize and relate to others

Genuine Concerns About Social Media

- Daily usage can create self-imposed problems:
 - Shortened attention spans -- quickly bored; needs constant input of the new and exciting
 - Staying indoors and sedentary -- no one goes outside anymore.
 - Narcissism -- it is all about me and my thoughts, opinions, words, and actions
 - Nomodephobia -- the fear of losing ones' cell phone, social media access, or internet reception. No Mobile Device Phobia

Genuine Concerns About Social Media

- Endangering our children
 - High harm-avoidance: these individuals tend to be worrisome, fearful, pessimistic, and shy.
 - Altered reward dependence: the teen becomes dependent on rewards associated with the internet or cell phone as opposed to natural rewards received from spending time with friends and family, getting good grades, or partaking in hobbies.
 - Low self-esteem from endless and endemic comparison structures in social media
 - Truncated cooperation, increased resistance to authority, lack of ability to interact with others in a healthy manner

Genuine Concerns About Social Media

- Our attachment to our mobile devices is impacting our homes and changing our behavior
 - Prov. 23:29-35 - “Who has woe? Who has sorrow? Who has contentions? Who has complaints? Who has wounds without cause? Who has redness of eyes? 30 Those who linger long at the wine, Those who go in search of mixed wine. 31 Do not look on the wine when it is red, When it sparkles in the cup, When it swirls around smoothly; 32 At the last it bites like a serpent, And stings like a viper. 33 Your eyes will see strange things, And your heart will utter perverse things. 34 Yes, you will be like one who lies down in the midst of the sea, Or like one who lies at the top of the mast, saying: 35 They have struck me, but I was not hurt; They have beaten me, but I did not feel it. When shall I awake, that I may seek another drink?”

Christian Families In The Age Of Social Media

- We have obligations to our families
 - Eph. 6:1-4 - “Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. 2 Honor your father and mother, which is the first commandment with promise: 3 that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth. 4 And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord.”

Christian Families In The Age Of Social Media

- Deut. 6:4-9 - “Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one! 5 You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength. 6 And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. 7 You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up. 8 You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. 9 You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.”

Christian Families In The Age Of Social Media

- Do we set guide lines for our family? The American Academy of Pediatrics set the following guidelines (2016):

• AGE	SCREEN TIME
• 0-18 months	Zero
• 18m to 3yrs	20-30 minutes
• 3-5yrs	1 hour max
• 6 and up	Limited and monitored

Christian Families In The Age Of Social Media

- Giving them a smartphone and unlimited access to the Internet will do more harm to their eternal souls than what they can do to their physical bodies behind the wheel of the car
- What happens on teenage smartphones when they are unmonitored and unlimited? Sexting, viewing pornography, bullying, body shaming, selfish, arrogant behavior, ungodly language, and disrespect and disobedience toward parents and anyone in authority.

Doing What Is 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.”

Doing What Is 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.”

Doing What Is 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.”

Doing What Is 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.”
- 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 To Christians By Social Media

- 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 To Christians By Social Media

- Encouragement
 - 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 To Christians By Social Media

- Education

- 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.”

God's Word Overrules Social Media

- Share joy and gratitude
 - 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.”
 - Psalm 105:1 - “Oh, give thanks to the LORD! Call upon His name; Make known His deeds among the peoples!”
- Be an encouragement
 - Rom. 12:10 - “Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another”
- Speak with grace
 - Col. 4:6 - “Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one.”

God's Word Overrides Social Media

- Promote good things
 - Phil. 4:8-9 - “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. 9 The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do, and the God of peace will be with you.”
 - Isa. 52:7 - “How beautiful upon the mountains Are the feet of him who brings good news, Who proclaims peace, Who brings glad tidings of good things, Who proclaims salvation, Who says to Zion, Your God reigns!”

God's Word Overrides Social Media

- Build stronger friendships
 - Rom. 12:10-13 - "Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another; 11 not lagging in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord; 12 rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing steadfastly in prayer; 13 distributing to the needs of the saints, given to hospitality."
- Encourage spiritual things
 - Matt. 5:14-15 - "You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. 15 Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lamp stand, and it gives light to all who are in the house"

God's Word Overrules Social Media

- Seek to comfort and aid the weak
 - Rom. 12:15 - "Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep."
- Overcome evil with good
 - Rom. 12:21 - "Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good."
- Take advantage of teaching opportunities
 - 2Peter 3:17-18 - "You therefore, beloved, since you know this beforehand, beware lest you also fall from your own steadfastness, being led away with the error of the wicked; 18 but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."

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 worship services ought to be who you are on Sunday night on Facebook.

A Few Things Are Certain

- This issue 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

A Few Things Are Certain

- 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.”