

Living Sensibly, Righteously and Godly in the Present Age of Electronic Communications

Panel Discussion: Our Personal Use of Electronic Communications
Sunday School, August 2011



Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore, **take up the full armor of God, so that you will be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm.**

~ Ephesians 6:11-13

For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to **live sensibly (self-control in mind and emotion; temperate), righteously and godly in the present age,** looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus, who gave Himself for us to **redeem us from every lawless deed,** and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession, **zealous for good deeds.**

~ Titus 2:11-14

therefore

WATCH and PRAY

With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints.

~ Ephesians 6:18

1. Social Media

- Facebook
- Google
- Google Buzz
- Twitter

2. Personal Devices

- Cell Phone
- iPod
- Smart Phone
- Tablet Computer

3. Internet Communication

- Email
- Blog
- Chat
- Skype

Just as we set goals, schedules and rules for our households, schooling and jobs, we should be purposeful in our use of media and technology. Ask yourself these questions as you prayerfully consider whether your use of technology should be adjusted in order to *set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth* (Colossians 3:2).

“Ever plan for yourself
in simple dependence on God.
It is nothing less than self-idolatry to
conceive that we can carry on
even the ordinary matters of the day
without his counsel...
No step well prayed over
will bring ultimate regret.”
~ Charles Bridges

I. Before purchasing, signing up or logging in

- Is this a need or just a want?
- How will it help me in making my life more productive?
- What will this technology take away from me?
Is it worth it?
- Can I function without it? Will being without it cause hardship for me or others?
- Is it costly? Do the costs outweigh the advantages?
- Do I recognize the dangers present in using this technology or media, especially for my children?
- Am I willing to go without these things if they begin to hinder me or my family in any way?



II. Using the Technology/Media

A. Redeeming the Time

See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil.

~ Ephesians 5:15-16 (KJV)

- Is this helping or hindering me to redeem the time God has given me? Is this really the *most profitable* use of my time (considering the Lord, my family, home, and ministries)?
- Am I spending time with these kinds of communication as a means of “recreation/fun” or as a means of fulfilling my responsibilities? Both are legitimate—do I have the right balance between them?
- If I didn’t have email, Facebook, etc., what would I be giving my time and attention to instead at any given moment?
- What is the most efficient and profitable way to accomplish this communication?
- Is there a better time to do this? Will doing so now hinder me from fulfilling any of my primary responsibilities or obligations?
- Am I willing to clock all the time I spend on the internet in a day? Would I be ashamed of the results?

B. Nurturing my relationships—God, family, and friends

But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit.

~ II Corinthians 3:18

Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves

~ Philippians 2:3

- Am I sacrificing my walk with the Lord for the use of these things?
- What is my go-to time-filler—prayer or memorization and meditation of God’s Word? Or checking Facebook or email?
- Am I sacrificing the *quality* of my more important relationships (husband, children, parents, siblings, close friends) for a *quantity* of more peripheral relationships (distant cousins, classmates, casual friends)?
- Do I find myself thinking about and wanting to be involved in online activities or discussions while I’m spending time with God, family, friends, or in ministry?
- Would I have more time and energy for face-to-face ministry (for example, making a meal for someone or mentoring a younger woman or teen) if I spent less time on some of these things? Am I *replacing* face-to-face ministry with online ministry?
- What kind of example am I setting for my children either by the amount of time spent or the things that I read, say and do online?

C. Displaying wisdom from above—Posting on Blogs or Facebook

Who among you is wise and understanding? Let him show by his good behavior his deeds in the gentleness of wisdom . . . But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering, without hypocrisy.

~ James 3:13, 17

- What is my motivation for posting this picture or comment? Affirmation or attention? An opportunity to complain or vent frustration? Competing with someone else?
- Am I sharing God's work and goodness in my life from a pure heart?
- How might my post communicate to others despite what I intend by it?
- Have I thought about my broad audience and not just a few friends?
- Am I unashamed at the thought that I will give an account to God for what I'm about to share?
- Am I responding right now to what I'm seeing in a God-honoring way in my heart? Am I coveting and judging or rejoicing and sympathizing?
- Am I willing not to post if the Holy Spirit brings a caution to my mind or a check to my spirit?

Produced and distributed by:
Mount Calvary Baptist Church, © 2011
Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture quotations are taken from the NEW AMERICAN
STANDARD BIBLE®, Copyright, ©1960,1962,1963,1968,1971,1972,1973,1975,
1977,1995 by the Lockman Foundation. Used by permission.