

Connectivity Can Corrupt



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Living in the 21st century has us using some form of modern technology almost every day; and we are thankful for every helpful tool God enables us to use—but not misuse! Like anything, it can corrupt; it can be dangerous; and it can become an idol if we allow it to. These new types of connections to a huge amount of information, images, ideas, opinions, or entertainment, compel serious warnings—be responsible if connected!

There are countless websites, Twitter feeds, podcasts—videos or Instagram photos we might consider as *favorites* because we find them interesting, informative, and entertaining. As with any source of information, there are dangerous areas that we must be aware of—and avoid! Online information resources can be very helpful if used properly; but very harmful if used improperly.

We must pray every day for guidance every second—asking God to show us if our use of social media, or anything, is out of balance with our spiritual concerns, or more important responsibilities we have to our family, friends, and children. The Holy Spirit is ready to enlighten us and to show us if our online activity needs to be changed or adjusted.

It is all too easy to spend all too much time getting too much information by being connected, instead of interacting with others and speaking personally with friends who may need encouragement from God's Word. Hebrews 10:25 *“Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in*

the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.”

Attending church services with other believers gives that opportunity to encourage someone—such close community reflects the Trinity—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—2 Corinthians 13:14 *“May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.”* 1 Corinthians 12:20 We are *“many members, yet but one body;”* 27 *“and each of you is a part of it.”*

Social media connections can be time-consuming—it is great to stay informed, but wanting to keep up with everything, can be exhausting, and we find ourselves spending more and more time connected instead of interacting. Way too much time can be spent on Facebook, Twitter, or who posted on Instagram. We can find ourselves seeking online information more than seeking Matthew 6:33 *“the kingdom of God, and his righteousness.”*

It is *not* a sin to *use* technology but it definitely *is* to *misuse* it. The two natures within need to be fed—and the one we feed the *most* is the one that gains *control* of our choices. Everything we *do* and everything we *view* is Hebrews 4:13 *“open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account.”*

Connectivity and responsibility means we are alert every second to Satan's subtle scheming to attract us and then lure us onto areas that would defile our conscience and destroy our soul. Matthew 24:4 *“Take heed that no man deceive you”*—we must live a *holy life* in an increasingly *unholy world*. It is *everyone's* responsibility to be sure that every *click* and every *tap*—be in-line with God's Word.

A believer in Christ faces unprecedented challenges today, and being connected just offers *new ways* to feed *old sins*. Mark 7:21-23 *“From with-*

in, out of a person's heart, come evil thoughts, [fornication], theft, murder, adultery, greed, wickedness, deceit, eagerness for lustful pleasure, envy, slander, pride, and foolishness. All these vile things come from within; they are what defile you and make you unacceptable to God.” Connectivity means we must be responsible.

The more *time* we spend connected, the more *time* Satan has to entice us to look at images or read material that would corrupt. The more time we spend connected, the greater possibility there will be for Satan to have us trespass onto forbidden areas—he makes it so easy to wander outside scriptural boundaries.

The prophet Ezra prayed Ezra 9:15, *“We are before thee in our trespasses: for we cannot stand before thee because of this.”* We would *not* be able to stand righteous before the Lord Jesus on the Day of Judgment, if we deliberately trespass onto forbidden areas when connected. We must ask ourselves before connecting and surfing aimlessly—why we are doing what we are doing.

We are responsible to heed the warnings before connecting online. Anyone who has read the Bible, cannot *say* they were not *warned*—1 Corinthians 6:18 *“Flee fornication”*—don't linger; don't experiment; don't test our ability to resist; just *flee* and *run* from such material or images as Joseph did. One minute we can be looking at good material, and the next hour looking at vile images—Satan is relentless in tempting us to stray onto such areas.

A young member shares some thoughts—*After reading “The Internet & Eternal Interests” these things came to mind—We are to be wary of what is viewed online; particularly immoral web sites. To list all the sins available online would make a very long list indeed, but some other points could be mentioned. Being part of this computer-literate generation, I have witnessed much more than just viewing things that could be a spiritual hindrance. What is*

easily typed or said online—hiding behind our keyboard and mask of a screen—can cut very deeply into the emotions and feelings of others.

The gossip associated with texting and blogging is as serious as any other type of gossip, and it is so easy to do behind someone's back. With this vast array of communication possibilities at our finger tips, it is very easy to become ensnared by worldly people, who do not share our spiritual interests; or to have friends that we would rather others not know we have.

There is also the potential of addictive online games that can take us away from the family, or from time with the Lord and the reading His Word. Even safe movies and good literature online, are as easily addictive as anything else; and the advertisements on just about any website, are as potentially dangerous as the commercials viewed on TV.

Scripture verses quoted were 1 Peter 5:8-9 “*Curb every passion [be sober], and be on the alert [vigilant—cautious; watchful]. Your great accuser [adversary—enemy], the Devil, is going about like a roaring lion to see whom he can devour [looking for some victim to devour].* 9 *Withstand [resist] him, firm in your faith; knowing that your brethren in other parts of the world are passing through just the same experiences [afflictions; and temptations].*”

The battlefield is for the mind—Satan wants to steal our mind and then our soul. John 10:10 “*The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.*”

If God has our *mind*, He has our *emotions*, our *desires*, and definitely our *time*. The one who has our mind, has it *all*—the mind is the *source* of our decisions. Satan has caught all too many off guard through the onslaught of the media—a media that overflows like raging flood waters every day.

There is what is called *moral drift* in today's world—For instance; do those things that once *offended* us, now *entertain* us; do we enjoy programs, films, shows, or books that have values diametrically *opposed* to Bible teaching and example! We should ask ourselves those questions, and then give very honest answers. Modern media has *reset* the shock threshold—the level of violence and profanity has no limit today.

In a call to confession and repentance, the prophet said Ezekiel 23:21 “*You longed for the lewdness of your youth.*” With the Holy Spirit's help, we can conduct our connected activities and viewing preferences properly—but we must *ask* for His help. Psalm 101:3 “*I will set no wicked [vulgar] thing before mine eyes: I hate the work of them that turn aside; it shall not cleave to me.*”

Young teens need guidelines set by the family—whether to be online or not; whether they can make voice calls, but many now have iPads, iPods, or Tablets that connect through WiFi—therefore giving them access to many types of social media—photos; blogs, opinions, fashions, and attitudes.

The problem is that most of the individuals with whom we can connect, have no desire to follow Bible instruction. This is obvious from the words those on social media write, or what pics they post—many indicating that they have no desire to quote Scripture verses to encourage, or to dress modestly according to Bible instructions, but only to impress those who view their photos, or to influence those who read their blogs.

Every individual, who has a device capable of connecting to any type of social media, is responsible for the choices they make, the images they view, and the words they read—not to mention that we are *all* responsible for what we say, write, or post that would affect others.

The apostle says 1 Thessalonians 5:8 “*Since we belong to the day, let us be self-controlled [or be re-*

sponsible when connected], putting on faith and love as a breastplate [of protection against Satan who entices us onto forbidden areas], and the hope of salvation as a helmet”—of protection against so many temptations facing young people today.

The devil makes it easy to hide behind the mask of our screen or tablet, and to say things that tear down someone's reputation or character. Satan makes it easy to *say* or *write* or *text* something that ought *not* be said, written, or sent. The apostle adds 1 Thessalonians 5:11 “*Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing*”—if we are doing.

This is the connected generation, therefore, we are responsible for our actions, words, photos, comments, and opinions. Before ever tapping “*send*” let us pause a second, think about what we just wrote, and ask: Is *this* what I would want someone to say about *me*? Is this going to *build* someone *up*, or *tear* them *down*? Should I send what I just texted—or would I, and many others, be much better off if I left it unsaid? Let us tap many more “*backspace*,” and very few “*send*!”

1 John 2:15-16 “*Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16 For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world.*”

We are *responsible* for *ourselves*; and we are *obligated* to the One who paid for our soul. 1 Corinthians 6:20 “*For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God*”—when connected via social media sources. Eternity is way too *long*; and horrors of Hell are way too *horrible* to be wrong about the seriousness of having a defiled conscience; an impure heart; or a corrupted mind! Philippians 2:5 “*Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.*”



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