

If Online; Be on Guard!



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It is all too easy to *not* be on-guard to the serious dangers that surround us in a spiritually dark world—a world that constantly distracts us in a multitude of ways. Jesus warned Mark 13:33 “*Take ye heed, watch and pray: [Be on guard! Be alert!]: for ye know not when the time [of His return] is.*” Just about everyone is connected to a huge amount of information and material today.

Computers are used for every type of communication; sharing files; for shopping, banking, learning, entertainment, and staying in touch with anyone and everyone. There is, however, a very dark side to being online—we *must* be *aware*; *alert*; *watchful*; and *on-guard* every second to the dangers lurking behind computer screens. The apostle repeated the Lord’s warning 1 Corinthians 16:13 “*Be on your guard; stand firm in the faith; be men of courage; be strong.*”

If someone wanted to read or view objectionable books or photos some time ago—they had difficulty in obtaining such material, but now an enormous amount of offensive; corrupt; depraved, perverted, and immoral anything—is just a click or a tap away.

Online information is so easy to access—and because photos, images, videos, and information are available in the privacy of one’s room or in the palm of your hand—millions have become entangled in sin by accessing online sites that drag them

further into decadent; wicked; and illegal material. One *click* can lead to a serious *addiction* that can be difficult to break.

Temptations have increased exponentially with new forms of communication and online connections to an enormous amount of information—information that is not always helpful, but often very harmful to anyone accessing online material. Some serious *warnings* are needed. There is a 1st century Book for the 21st century—and it gives current information on how to be on guard; if online.

There has been an enormous increase of cell phones; text messaging; emails; Podcasts—digital audio files and videos available on the Internet, we have to be on guard! There are a host of social media sites—Facebook, Twitter, Instagram—and so many others by just as many names, that everyone must be on guard all the time. It is okay to *use* technology, but *not* okay to *misuse* it. Any device that *causes* us to sin—is being misused.

We have to be on guard every minute to Satan’s wicked ways to lure us onto areas that would *defile* our conscience and eventually *destroy* our soul—if corrective measures are not taken. Jesus continues to warn Matthew 24:4 “*Take heed that no man deceive you.*” We must live a *holy life* in an increasingly *unholy world*.

Every choice we make *online* must be *in-line* with God’s will and Word. There are millions of things online that have the potential to *deceive* us and to *lead* us into more and more serious sins—and which can quickly become serious addictions—we *must* be *on-guard* and more *alert* than ever!

There is an *old book* that deals with *new sins*—it is a *must-read* in our struggle against Satan. Hebrews 12:1 “*Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us [ensnares us], and*

let us run with patience the race that is set before us”—in Scripture.

Millions upon millions have become *ensnared* by accessing online sites that have *caused* them to sin—in *thought*, in *word* and in *action*. Wanting to *do* God’s *will* is the only way to live a *pure* life in a very *impure* and *evil* world today. We *have* to be Romans 12:12 “*Earnest and persistent in prayer.*”

Jesus warns that if our eye, hand, or foot is *causing* us to sin, we are to take *drastic* action and *remove* the cause Matthew 5:29-30, 18:8-9; Mark 9:43-48—like cancel a subscription; stop online service; or unsubscribe to a mail list. Our spiritual and eternal interests are way too important *not* to take action.

Young people want to share their experiences with others or the world, and do so on Instagram; Facebook; Twitter; or YouTube. We live in a very *fallen* world, however, controlled by a *fallen* angel, the devil, so predators are using the information from social media sites for evil purposes. *Watch out that no one deceives you*, takes on new meaning—there is a dark side to being online.

Modern technology can be used as a valuable tool in sharing the full-Truth Gospel message that God has inspired to be shared in our church services. Written *words* can be a spiritual *light* for someone who may never have heard about trusting God in faith for healing without medical help; to place injustices before God in prayer without court action; for daily finances without using government monies; or being saved by a trusting faith in the Atonement Blood of Christ. Matthew 24:14 “*This gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come.*”

It is *not* a sin to *use* technology, but it *is* a sin to *misuse* it. The two natures within need to be fed—and the one we *feed most* is the one that *controls most*. The nature we nourish by *day* will soon control by *night*. Any unscriptural viewing will

lead to lustful thoughts and ungodly desires. Profits from the porn industry are staggering—we are responsible for our online choices.

Many think their surfing can be kept secret or erased—but Hebrews 4:13 *“Nothing in all creation is hidden from God’s sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account.”* It is a serious warning and humbling thought to know we will stand before the One who took our place on the cross and shed His Blood so we could be free from such addictions.

1 Corinthians 6:19-20 *“Do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? 20 For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God’s.”*

We face unprecedented challenges today and the Internet offers *new ways* to feed *old sins*. Online services bring *new twists* to the *old issue* of how to live a *holy life* in a *wicked world*. Immoral material can quickly and easily invade our home and mind by an unguarded click or tap. We have to *use technology scripturally*—while surrounded by many temptations and enticements.

Galatians 6:7 *“Be not deceived; God is not mocked.”* Ezekiel 18:20 *“The soul who sins shall die.”* 21 *“But if a wicked man turns from all his sins which he has committed, keeps all My statutes, and does what is lawful and right, he shall surely live; he shall not die.”* There will be a day of reckoning and accountability—but the solution is simple, just make *right choices* with the Lord’s help.

If we will *confess*, God *forgives* 1 John 1:9. If we stop using technology to feed the flesh—repent and forsake those sins, God forgives and will *not* charge them against us. Modern technology can be used in a right and scriptural way—but Satan will seriously tempt us to *misuse* it.

We must be aware of the danger facing young people today and to set online guidelines in our

home. The computer should be visible so what is being *viewed* can easily be monitored. Children must be advised about the scriptural way to be online. Psalm 101:3 *“I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes.”*

If we do not Ephesians 6:11 *“Put on the whole armour of God,”* we will *not* be able to resist the *“Strategies and tricks of the Devil.”* If we do not take responsibility for our choices, it will be no contest against the enemy of our soul who will succeed in entering our mind. The struggle against sin is an on-going battle—it is Ephesians 6:12 *“Against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.”*

Households must be on-guard to the ungodly material available today. Young people must have limits placed on their computer use and online time. 1 Peter 5:8 *“Be self-controlled [sober, vigilant] [curb every passion] and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around”* like a tiger stalking its victim—stealthily, but deliberately, *“looking for someone to devour”*—deceive and destroy.

Commandment #7 says Exodus 20:14 *“Thou shalt not commit adultery,”* but Jesus says adultery can be *thinking* immoral thoughts. Matthew 5:28 *“I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart.”* The One who *forgives* our *sins* is ready to *change* our *hearts*. Ezekiel 18:27 *“If a wicked man turns away from the wickedness he has committed and does what is just and right, he will save his life.”* It is a *choice*—but a very *important* one.

We are all accountable for our actions and decisions—are we following the *Word* or the *world* with online time—is the question. Our *choices* come from the *heart*, because Luke 17:21 *“The kingdom of God is within you.”* We will give an *account* to the Judge of everyone on earth.

There are many new issues to deal with today—being online is just one of them. We must be

a witness for Truth—1 Corinthians 10:1-5 *“Brethren, I do not want you to be unaware that all our fathers were under the cloud, all passed through the sea, 2 all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, 3 all ate the same spiritual food, 4 and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ. 5 But with most of them God was not well pleased, for their bodies were scattered in the wilderness.”*

6 *“Now these things became our examples, to the intent that we should not lust after evil things as they also lusted. 8 Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand.”* That is a very serious *warning* about the serious *responsibility* of being online!

Our one desire is to stand before the Son of God on the day of judgment and be accepted into the kingdom with our heart *cleansed* and our sins *forgiven*—that is more important today than ever! Since it is a matter of the *heart*—making online choices—the words of Jesus take on a whole new meaning.

Mark 7:21-23 *“From within, 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.”*

If Online; Be on Guard! We *must use* technology in a *scriptural way*—or make the *choice* to eliminate it! *Use* it—or *misuse* it—that is everyone’s choice!



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