

SOCIAL MEDIA

REVIEW

Last week we discussed godly convictions for our use of media, referring to TV, movies, internet, and video games.

- 1) We said that what we see and hear impacts what we think and ultimately, what we do.
- 2) We said that all media communicates a world view - that is, a way to look at the world. Does most media communicate a godly world view or a worldly world view?
- 3) Therefore, if we continually fill our minds with worldly messages, it will slowly desensitize us and conform us, not to the truth of God, but to believe the lies of Satan.

So, what kind of convictions did you come up with regarding your use of media?

Tonight, we want to discuss social media. Media that is intended to help us communicate with each other and be more connected. Such things as texting, email, facebook, snapchat, twitter, smart phones, etc.

Technology is not necessarily good or bad. It all depends on how we use it and how it influences our lives.

Cultural Trends Related to Social Media

I. We are more connected, but communicating less than ever before.

A. Problem: Lack of Meaningful Communication

- 1) In the *Black & Gold*, the TC Central School paper, there was an article in the February 3 issue, entitled, "Technology is Taking Over." The student reporter, Abby Harish, says this, "Technology and social media will be the death of our generation when it comes to interpersonal communication. We are the most connected, most social generation ever, yet our actual communication skills will be the worst in the modern era."
- 2) Why do you think she says that? (How many of you would rather text that talk to someone?)
- 3) Abby cites a survey done of children, where only 40% of them said they would rather swap their TV and computer time for playing outside. That means 60% of them would rather be by themselves and play or connect online than interact with others face to face.
- 4) How often have you seen a couple sitting across from each other at a restaurant, and instead of talking with each other, they are looking at their devices? Or a group of students standing in a circle facing each other, but instead of talking, they are all on their devices?
- 5) You may have 2000 friends online, but how many "real" friends do you have, who would drop everything to come and help you?

- 6) People are more distracted than ever before in their communication.
 - (a) Have you ever been talking to someone and they get a text, and even though you are still talking, they read their text?
 - (b) Whenever people are on their devices, they are not present in their surroundings.

B. Solution: Priority of Personal Relationships

- 1) When God wanted to communicate with us, He didn't just send the Bible down from heaven in written form. He came in the flesh. God designed us for personal relationships with one another. Jesus spent time with the disciples (John 3:22).
- 2) We need one another to grow and mature (Eph. 4:15-16)
- 3) How does being around other committed Christians impact your walk with God?
 - (a) Lessen temptation
 - (b) Encouraged by their example (Heb. 3:13)
 - (c) Can help me up when I fall (Eccl. 4:9-12)
- 4) Genuine communication is essential to sharing the gospel
 - (a) Conversation, listening, asking questions, reading body language, hearing voice inflections, are vital to understanding and meaningful dialogue.
 - (b) Trying to communicate in short snippets makes it very difficult to communicate complex truth accurately.

II. We Tend to Use Social Media to Feel Connected Without the Risk of Vulnerability

A. Problem

- 1) We all want to be accepted and have a desire for people to know us.
- 2) Unfortunately, often we are afraid if someone really knew us, they would reject us.
- 3) It is easy to use social media to share about only those areas of your life that you want others to know, so you can feel accepted and connected.
- 4) The problem is that it is not the real you, and the acceptance is only superficial, and it leaves you feeling lonely and disconnected.
- 5) Being "connected" online isn't the same as spending time with someone. It makes us feel connected, but it's not real.
- 6) Oftentimes, social media becomes a way to draw attention to ourselves, so we can feel good about ourselves.
 - (a) Youtube's description is: "Broadcast yourself"
 - (b) Gopro says: "Now you can be the star of your own movie."
 - (c) Why do some people feel like they need to chronicle their days with online selfies or status updates?
 - (d) Who is the focus of all this attention?

B. Solution

- 1) We must go to Christ for our worth and acceptance.
- 2) He knows everything about us. We can't hide anything from Him (Ps. 44:21; Heb. 4:13)
- 3) He sees us for who we really are, and yet He still loves us (Rom. 5:8, 1 John 4:9-12).
- 4) We too often over indulge with social media, to feel accepted without risking personal vulnerability. Instead of making us feel more accepted, we feel more

isolated. But

with God, we find that we are far more loved than we could have imagined, precisely because we are vulnerable.

III. We Tend to Use Social Media to Craft Our Own Identity

A. Problem

- 1) This is clearly related to a lack of vulnerability. This is using social media to craft an identity that always makes me look good.
- 2) We tend to post pictures and status updates that make our lives look exciting and adventurous.
- 3) We carefully control what we put online to craft an identity so others will think well of us. But it's not necessarily an authentic picture of us.
- 4) I realize that some post really negative stories about their lives. But why do they post them? Is it because any attention, even from negative things, is better than no attention?

B. Solution

- 1) The world says that we must constantly be excelling and improving in order to have value and worth.
- 2) God says we will never find our value and worth in our works (Rom. 3:10; Is. 64:6; Eph. 2:8-9).
- 3) The truth is not that we are not good enough; the truth is that we are not good at all.
- 4) Our worth is a free gift, found only in our identity in Christ.
- 5) Only the gospel has the power to bring us into fellowship with the source of true intimacy and complete acceptance: Jesus.
- 6) It's not based on what we do. It's based on what Christ did. So we can be real and don't need to try to fabricate a fake identity in front of our friends.

IV. Constant Use of Social Media Can Lead to a Restlessness and Discontentment

A. Problem

- 1) Any time we have any down time, we are always looking for more information, a new invitation, relationship updates, etc., instead of appreciating and enjoying what is right in front of you.
- 2) This is the person that sits with their family, that has to always be looking at their devices.
- 3) Why is it that we feel compelled to look immediately at a text, or never go anywhere without our phones?
- 4) What do we feel we need to get from our phones, facebook, or twitter?
- 5) Social media can be very helpful, but too much can be sinful.
- 6) John Piper said it this way, "One of the great uses of Twitter and Facebook will be to prove at the last day that prayerlessness was not from lack of time."
- 7) If you are addicted to checking your phone constantly, at the expense of the people physically in front of you, there might be a sin issue at play.

B. Solution

- 1) Social media in and of itself is not the problem. The problem that we have as sinners is that we often take good things and make them false gods. We go to them to try to have needs met, instead of going to God.
- 2) Why do we feel we need to constantly check our texts, facebook, or whatever? What are we looking for? What are we afraid we are going to miss?
- 3) God has given us Himself to enjoy and placed people into our lives to love and serve. When we do, we will find contentment. (1 Tim. 6:6; Heb. 13:5).
- 4) We shouldn't allow even good things to distract us, so we don't appreciate what's right in front of us.
- 5) If we aren't careful, we can waste a lot of time on things that really don't matter.

CONCLUSION

Technology is not necessarily good or bad. It all depends on how we use it and how it influences our lives. We should never allow it to occupy a place in our hearts that belongs to God. If you want to find out how much pull it has on your heart, do a 30-day fast from it!

APPLICATION (Discuss in small groups)

- 1) How much time do you spend on social media?
- 2) What do you like/dislike about it?
- 3) If a person was addicted to social media, what do you think it would look like? Do you think they would be able to tell?
- 4) What is your motivation behind the pictures you post and status updates? Is it ever to look good to your friends?
- 5) Have you ever been motivated to try to make your life look adventurous or exciting?
- 6) Do you agree that we are more connected than ever before, but are feeling more isolated and communicating less than ever? Why/why not?
- 7) How is the gospel the answer to looking to social media for acceptance, validation, and worth?
- 8) Do you think that social media can cause a person to be distracted and discontent? If so, how?
- 9) What actions do you need to take as a result of this lesson?