

Steve Whitacre
SESSION 6 | SOCIAL MEDIA

I. INTRODUCTION

II. WHAT IS SOCIAL MEDIA

- A very simple definition of social media: any means of digital communication from a distance.
- Any online platform or app that allows us to create or share content with others.

III. THE BENEFITS AND DANGERS OF SOCIAL MEDIA

A. The Benefits of Social Media

- Connection over distance
- Unparalleled opportunities for learning
- Quick access to any information ever

B. The Dangers of Social Media

- The prideful vanity of status
- Comparison and the destruction of contentment
 - Wasting time
 - "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." John Piper, Twitter, 10/20/2009.

- Loss of the undivided heart and single-minded devotion (Or: distraction and the splintering of concentration)
- The folly of ignorant-expertise and free flow of careless words
- Ready access to all sorts of evil and the easy, imperceptible slide
- The consuming impulse of Idolatry

IV. **NOT SO MUCH AGAINST SOCIAL MEDIA AS FOR:**

- A gospel-driven everything
- A robust and consistent devotional life with God
- Attention and concentration
- True friendship with real people
- Faithful presence in the world
- Enjoying and stewarding creation

V. **HOW TO BUILD A “PERSONAL SOCIAL MEDIA STRATEGY”**

A. Think about this and write it down.

B. Start with Scripture. A starter collection...

- All things are under God:
 - “The eyes of the Lord are in every place, keeping watch on the evil and the good.” (Proverbs 15:3).

- All things are for God:
 - “So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.” (1 Corinthians 10:31).
 - Can doesn’t mean should:
 - ““All things are lawful for me,” but not all things are helpful. “All things are lawful for me,” but I will not be dominated by anything.” (1 Corinthians 6:12).
 - ““All things are lawful,” but not all things are helpful. “All things are lawful,” but not all things build up.” (1 Corinthians 10:23).
 - Consider the content:
 - “Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.” (Philippians 4:8).
 - Watch the time:
 - “Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, making the best use of the time, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.” (Ephesians 5:15–17).
 - Accountable to God...
 - “Why do you pass judgment on your brother? Or you, why do you despise your brother? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God; for it is written, “As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God.” So then each of us will give an account of himself to God.” (Romans 14:10–12).
 - “I tell you, on the day of judgment people will give account for every careless word they speak, for by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned.”” (Matthew 12:36–37).
- C. Examine your assumptions.
- D. Discover your motive and purpose.
- Why am I doing this? (What leads me to this?)
 - What is my goal? (What do I hope will be the outcome?)
- E. Consider your social media participation in the context of your other responsibilities, commitments, and opportunities.

- F. Set limits (both time and place).
- G. Test yourself by involving others.
- H. Test yourself by going without (and adding _____ instead).
 - Try a social media fast
 - Try a social media Sabbath
- I. FOR PARENTS

VI. CONCLUSION

Introductory Reading:

- Tony Reinke, "Why We Should Escape Social Media (And Why We Don't)" (Desiring God: <https://bit.ly/2PrEfXw>)
- Nicholas Carr, "Is Google Making us Stupid?" (*The Atlantic*: <https://bit.ly/2lw3T3f>)
- Justin Taylor, "Why Ben Sasse Quit Twitter for Half a Year—And What He Now Teaches His Family about Social Media" (TGC: <https://bit.ly/2G2lhaH>)
- Cal Newport, "Quit Social Media. Your Career May Depend on It." (*New York Times*: <https://nyti.ms/2jJ589R>)
- Robinson Meyer, "Your Smartphone Reduces Your Brainpower, Even If It's Just Sitting There" (*The Atlantic*: <https://bit.ly/2witH38>)
- Elizabeth Bernstein, "Are We All Braggarts Now?" (*Wall Street Journal*: <https://on.wsj.com/2zGJ0rl>)

For Further Reading:

- CJ Mahaney, ed., *Worldliness*
- Tony Reinke, *12 Ways Your Smartphone Is Changing You*
- Andy Crouch, *The Tech-Wise Family: Everyday Steps for Putting Technology in Its Proper Place*
- Nicholas Carr, *The Shallows: What the Internet Is Doing to Our Brains*
- William Powers, *Hamlet's BlackBerry: A Practical Philosophy for Building A Good Life in the Digital Age*
- Cal Newport, *Deep Work: Rules for Focused Success in a Distracted World*
- Maggie Jackson, *Distracted*