

A Christian Perspective on Social Media

As my dad use to say, “It’s a free country.” So, I guess we are all free to say or post anything that we want to say or post on Facebook, Instagram or Twitter.

But what is appropriate on Social Media, from a Christian perspective? The same people who would never abruptly argue with someone in a public setting regularly confront strangers or friends on Social Media.

Christians are to grow in wisdom and there is no place more in need of wisdom than today’s Social Media Platforms. I hope this paper helps us think through your public behavior on Social Media.

How we Respond, Reply or Comment

My mother use to tell me, “If you don’t have something good to say, don’t say anything.” This is the rule that most of us follow in public. We hear someone say something stupid at the mall’s food court. We don’t go over and tell the person how wrong they are. It is not our place, and in most cases, it is not appropriate.

The fear of being punched in the nose restrains most people from confronting strangers in the food court. As Christians, we are to be guided by this same wisdom. It is not wise to confront someone until you know all the facts. It is not wise to confront someone, if you have no chance of changing their mind. Pearls and swine don’t mix well. See Matthew 7:6.

99.9% of Christians would not stand in front of the church down the street with a sign that says, “This Church is a Cult.” They would not stand in front of someone’s house with a sign that says, “This person is a BAD person.” So why do we say the things we say in the public arena of Facebook? In the Food Court, five or ten people will hear us. On Facebook, hundreds of people will see our sign. Why do we act so badly in public? Here are my 7 rules. If you have more, send them to me. I may put them in my next version of this paper.

7 Appropriate Social Media Behaviors

Rule 1 – Keep your comments and responses positive – be an encourager.

Rule 2 – Don’t argue with people in two sentences or less. Just don’t argue.

Rule 3 – Don’t respond to negative comments – period.

Rule 4 – Give people the right to have a differing opinion than you.

Rule 5 – Address everyone with respect, even when they are not treating you respectfully.

Rule 6 – Ignore those who would try to stir up trouble. They may need attention, but you do not have to give them any.

Rule 7 – Don’t participate in FAKE “conversations” that start debates. Serious debates, conversations and disagreements should NOT be public. Satan loves to see Christians argue in public.

Christians should display decent, moral and loving behavior publicly. Correction is successful when it is done in the context of a loving relationship. When you correct your child, you do it in private. So, if you really, really have to confront someone, do it in private and follow these Scriptures.

Do not sharply rebuke an older man, but rather appeal to him as a father, to the younger men as brothers, the older women as mothers, and the younger women as sisters, in all purity. *1 Timothy 5:1-2 NASB*

“Do not give what is holy to dogs, and do not throw your pearls before swine, or they will trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you to pieces. *Matthew 7:6 NASB*

Like charcoal to hot embers and wood to fire, So is a contentious man to kindle strife. *Proverbs 26:21 NASB*

Do not go out hastily to argue your case; Otherwise, what will you do in the end, when your neighbor humiliates you? *Proverbs 25:9 NASB*

Should We Avoid All Social Media?

There are always Christian *Luddites* who abstain from new technology. Unfortunately, the children of Luddites never learn to live with applied wisdom in their culture. If you have a 10-year-old, total abstinence may be a good solution. He can't drive a car so why let him have full access to the world. But if your child is 16, he will soon have access to the world and the many opportunities it contains - opportunities to sin and opportunities to resist.

We should be teaching the Christian principles that we use on Social Media. Unless you plan on moving to the mountains or joining an Amish community, teaching the moral use of 21st Century technology is the best practise. There are good things that Social Media does for us. Total condemnation of using Social Media robs us of these benefits, the same way the Amish do not experience the benefits of electricity.

The internet should be viewed as a PUBLIC PLACE. Facebook, Instagram, You Tube, and Twitter are public. You would not take your clothes off in the middle of a parking lot. We can all agree on that – I hope. I will deal with what not to do on the next page. Here are my 7 Benefits of Social Media.

7 Good Things About Social Media

1. Keeping up with Family and Friends.

I am blessed to know a lot of people, but most of them no longer live close to me. Birthdays and graduations are still shared because of Face Book. Kids growing up, getting married and new babies are now a part of my life because of Face Book. I get to share the lives of many of the people who I no longer get to see in person. That is why it is called sharing. We Christians should be good at sharing our lives with one another.

2. Requests for prayer and help in times of emergency.

Today, someone that my wife led to Jesus 20 years ago had a heartache. He lives in another state and I have not seen him for at least 15 years. I am praying for him and hoping to hear some good news tomorrow. We used to develop elaborate phone groups to try to get the word out. I still text, call and email people for help in emergencies, but Facebook is quick and touches more people than I could ever call.

3. Live Facebook Christian meetings

I can attend many diverse meetings of Christians across the United States, because of Face Book. These live meetings do not take the place of real LIVE meetings. But my participation and sharing in meetings in 5 states in 5 days, would be logistically impossible, without Face Book.

4. Posts about specific Political happenings or World events that Christians SHOULD know.

Recently New York changed their abortion laws and the Christian community on Facebook knew almost immediately. Plus, this news was NOT filtered through a non-Christian perspective on a National News Program. Back page newspaper stories become front page stories on Social Media.

Christian News can be shared with in-depth links to the REAL story. We all need discernment when living our off-line lives, so of course we should use discernment when reading on-line stories. But most of the time, Christians can get more accurate information from Christian organizations on-line than they get from NBC, ABC or FOX.

5. Christian Books, Articles and Commentary can be distributed freely

I am a Christian author. I post things about my books and articles to people I think may be interested. My last post, about my newest book reached 105,000 people with over 30,000 responses. I use today's technology the same way pastors used PA systems to reach a larger crowd a century ago. Facebook is a very, very large PA system. The Anti-Church and Anti-Christian groups use this PA system. We should use it too.

6. Funny and satirical posts that make us laugh

There are a lot of stressful things going on in our world. Laughing at the absurd is one of the gifts that my friends give me. I repost these goofy and sometimes satirical thoughts to give the gift to someone else. I do not repost mocking or inappropriate humor. When it comes to humor, my on-line rules are the same as my off-line rules.

7. Respected teachers and older Christians sharing daily insight and wisdom

I am not talking about the "Click bait" posts that try to create a new Proverb with none of Solomon's wisdom. But the treasure of a heart-felt post from a wise older Christian reaches me because of Face Book. The wisdom of those who have gone before, can now be shared in real time, even though we are thousands of miles apart.

The above 7 types of Social Media Interactions are my examples of the good use of 21st Century technology. I am sure that innovative Christians will continue to create ways to use Social Media Platforms to promote Christianity and strengthen Christian families.

If you have other ideas, on how Social Media is a good thing in our world, email me at Greg@GregoryGrinstead.com.

What About the World and All the Sin?

I avoid the sinful world in my everyday life, and I avoid the sin on Facebook too. I try to maintain Jesus' loving and wise view of this sinful world. He loved men but was realistic about what was in the heart of men.

Now when He (*Jesus*) was in Jerusalem at the Passover, during the feast, many believed in His name, observing His signs which He was doing. But Jesus, on His part, was not entrusting Himself to them, for He knew all men, and because He did not need anyone to testify concerning man, for He Himself knew what was in man. *John 2:23-25 NASB*

I do not participate in sinful Social Media. I also do not participate with Christians, who live their lives with Christian behavior personally, but promote immorality with their posts. It is a sad, sad circumstance, when Christians post pro-abortion and other immoral posts. They are publicly supporting sinful behavior, even as they proclaim their personal Christianity.

It takes courage, wisdom and self-control to live as a Christian, in our troubled world. We should remind ourselves that Jesus died for those whom we see on Facebook doing stupid and sometimes really bad things. They are lost and don't know they have a need to be rescued by a loving God.

I would ask all Christians to stand firm but have the heart to help all those who would receive help. May we as Christians, act in a way publicly that will fulfill Matthew 5:16.

Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works and glorify your Father who is in heaven.

I would love to hear your thoughts and opinions on how we Christians should act on Social Media. Email Greg@GregoryGrinstead.com and I may put your thoughts in my next paper.