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## **For the Love of the Family Ministries™**

**Missionaries to America's Forgotten Mission Field, the Family**

**The Dangers Of Social Networking Part 2**

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### **THE DANGERS OF SOCIAL NETWORKING PART 2**

A few years back we published an article on "The Dangers Of Social Networking". Social Networking has become wildly popular in our day. It is almost an unrestrained activity. In the technological day we are in with things like instant messaging, twitter, chat rooms, Face Book and other popular social sites we have a recipe for a very serious situation and many spiritual disasters.

Here at For The Love Of The Family I am constantly called about Christian people being involved in pornography, unwholesome conversations with the opposite sex on the Internet, which cause great harm to homes, marriages, and children. I recommend that every Christian have a block on their computer to keep pornography out of their home. I recommend: <http://www.cleaninter.net/homepage.asp>.

The Internet has brought the world together in just a minute. We can say things in anger and post it and find out that after we have "cooled down" we should have never said that. One very

important thing to remember about the Internet is that once you send it out it will be in cyber space forever. The Internet can be used for good or bad. I can communicate with people I need to almost instantly and that is a whole lot better than snail mail. It is like everything else in our lives we have to set spiritual boundaries and understand if we let our guard down bad things can happen.

It is the naive parent who allows their children to be in chat rooms, unsupervised, or on the popular sites like Face Book, or supervised on these sites talking to the wrong people because many parents do not have spiritual discernment, and many other social network sites. Friends steal hearts and you as a parent are to get the child's heart and keep it, Proverbs 23:26. I would like to give some things to think about and questions to ask yourself about in social networking:

**1. Is it a good use of my time?** Many people spend hours on their computer but will not spend any time in God's Word?! If they do spend time in God's Word it is only token time not spending enough time or submitting themselves to God to allow Him to speak to their heart. Have you ask yourself this question, what is the comparison of the time I spend in social networking verses the time I spend refreshing myself spiritually? God's Word tells us, Ephesians 5:16, "Redeeming the time, because the days are evil." As a Christian we are to honor and glorify God in every aspect of our life **including how we use our time**. Are we wasting time on a frivolous activity that could be better spent in another area of our life? Many times mothers will spend hours on social sites and neglect their family and children. Many men neglect their wife and children by spending hours on the Internet or social sites at night, "when no one else is looking". That is seriously bad news. It makes for a weary day the next day and does not edify and build up the person. It can lead to serious problems. Are you a better person spiritually by spending this time in your life?

**2.**

**3. What about family and friends?** Many people have said to me "Face Book and other venues like it is a wonderful way for me to catch up with family and friends". Generally, this is after we are talking about the spiritual disasters in their life. **As a Christian I am to guard what I see and hear.** Much of what these quote "unsaved or carnal family and friends" talk about on these sites is not uplifting spiritually and in many instances wicked things are posted and said. We see things we should not see and engage in talking about things we should not talk about. James 3:5-6 talks about the tongue. When we write it and post it somewhere we have "said it". James 3:5-6., "Even so the tongue is a little member, and boasteth great things. Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth! And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature, and it is set on fire of hell. Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing, my brethren, these things ought not so to be". Many people post things they would never think about saying to others. They think it somehow is different.

While these sites can help us to communicate, **we have to set boundaries if we use them!** Not everyone who wants to be a friend on these sites should be allowed. The rule of thumb is this should be very limited not widely available.

**3. What about your personal information?** Many people have been hurt, killed, robbed,

stalked, molested or worse, by interaction with people on the Internet and on social sites. I am amazed at how much personal information people willingly put up on these sites. The world does not need to know the smallest details of your life. Some things are confidential between a husband and a wife. Many times people "spill the family beans" to others who have no business hearing or seeing this information. A rule of thumb is if you don't want it repeated, don't post it! It is too late after a tragedy strikes.

Awhile back, I had a pastor who sent to me every day, "Got up and bathed, ate my cereal and walked before starting my day." Honestly, that is a waste of his time and mine and quite frankly it is personal information I do not need to know. Who cares? Does it also show a feeling of so much importance that people worship me so much they want to know this information? Really, do we think we are that important?

**4. What about gossip?** Many people will get on these sites and talk about other people's business or other people. This certainly is a violation of Scripture. Proverbs 10:18, "He that hideth hatred with lying lips, and he that uttereth slander, is a fool". Psalm 31:13, "For I have heard the slander of many: fear was on every side: while they took counsel together against me, they devised to take away my life."

Many "friends" will scroll your status and site to see what they can gossip about concerning you and pass it on to others. Many times innocent things in your mind get posted and become serious issues in your life, home, marriage etc. Godly discretion needs to be used and proper boundary setting needs to be maintained. A question to ask myself is, "Is this person really necessary to have as a friend on the site?" Is this person going to be a deterrent to my spiritual life?

**5. Do you have "friends" who you have had a crush on in the past or have been romantically involved with in the past? Are you looking to find someone to chat with to fulfill a lust you have?** This is certainly a recipe for disaster and is inappropriate behavior. If I am a married person, I do not need to be talking to the opposite sex of my past or any person of the opposite sex in a sexually suggestive manner. A teenage girl or boy who is immature does not need to be involved in such activity because they are to give their heart to only one person in their life. It is a sad thing when a carnal parent encourages such activity and then loses the heart of their child. James 1:14-15, "But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin when it is finished, bringeth forth death (destruction)". II Timothy 3:5-6 "Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away." **For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts." I Thessalonians 5:22, "Abstain from all appearance of evil."**

**6. Has this become an addiction? Any activity I am involved should come under the guidelines of I Corinthians 6:19-20, "What know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." So, the Biblical goal of my life is to glorify God. Can I do that and be addicted to hours a day on**

social sites? The answer by most Christians would be, “Why sure I can.” Really?

It is always interesting to me that the Christian parent in church that allow their children to spend hours at these sites, are all for you preaching about issues until it comes to their children being involved. I have heard the following more than once, “If we don’t let them do this they will be turned off to God. They need to have friends. After all they are here all the time!” **Did you notice that the parent does not think it is important to hear God’s Word or set proper boundaries in their life? The priorities of their life are wrong!**

That is a lie from Satan. A social network site is more important than hearing God’s Word and God’s message for my life and setting godly boundaries in my life? I counsel many parents who have lost their children. I know that you folks out there can say, “Well, I know a preacher’s child that turned out not serving the Lord.” Well, I can tell you about them too, many of them who are not serving or living for God. Same thing applies for pastors and their families. Pastor if you put your head in the sand, and do not understand this is a heart issue you will lose your child.

**Hebrews 10:25 “Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.”**

**7. To raise children who are going to walk with God, I have to teach them to set right priorities.** Many Christians today are on the wayside because they have **idols of the heart.** **Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, (departs the house) he will not depart from it. Proverbs 22:6 My son, give me thine heart, and let thine eyes observe my ways, Proverbs 23:26.**

**James 1:13-17, “Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: But every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin when it is finished, bringeth forth death. Do not err, my beloved brethren. Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.”**

After several years of counseling people concerning their spiritual needs I have found the great need is to deal with the **idols of the heart.** Every spiritual problem is a problem of the heart. The reason we have many issues in our lives is because our heart wanders. Every child in rebellion is because their heart wanders. So, will a child’s heart wander who is spending hours a day on the computer in social networking sites? These things can easily become an idol of the heart. There is no Biblical change in the life of a Christian unless we get specific about idols of the heart. God has given us a tremendous mechanism. When we get saved, the Holy Spirit comes to indwell us. God engages us in the heart, inner man, or mind which are all synonymous in the Scripture.

II Peter 3:18, “But grow in the grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.  
To

him be glory both now and forever.” When the Holy Spirit convicts us of sin, it means God wants us to change that behavior of our life. It is not enough to just confess the sin to God. I have to repent of the behavior and “renew” or change my mind through God’s Word. Remember the goal of every Christian’s life is to honor and glorify God, I Corinthians 6:19-20.

The word “lust” or “lusts” in Scripture is an interesting word. In James 1:14, “But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own **lust**, and enticed.” It is the word for strong, overwhelming desire. In essence, what I call a **demand lust. Something that you have to have. Something that controls and motivates behavior. In essence, an idol of the heart.** Children are born with certain natural desires for food, drink, etc. They are not born with a desire for certain sports, music, designer clothes, etc. Those things come along with the environment in which they are raised. However, our children are born with a sin nature and a desire "to go their own way," Proverbs 14:12, 14, 16:25. One of the great failures of the modern Christian home is the training of our children spiritually to live for and serve the Savior and not to go "their own way." We do not train our children because we have failed to see the point of James 1:13-14. Obviously, we cannot train our children if we do not understand that we cannot live for our own lusts, "go our own way." Galatians 5:16, "This I say then, Walk in the Spirit and ye shall not **fulfill the LUSTS of the flesh.**" Unfortunately, this is where the problem lies for the contemporary Christian. We desire to live for the lusts of the flesh. Therefore, our children do as well. It is interesting to me that the Bible tells us that each of us has our own special lusts, actually designer lusts. In essence, these are things that I like and want. (Certainly social networking is in this picture big time today). Mine may be different from yours. Ephesians 2:3 calls these "the desires of the mind." Ephesians 2:3, "Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, **fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind**; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others." You see we all have our own "desires of the flesh and mind." In essence, designer lusts. We design our own lusts, the idols of the heart, Ezekiel 14:3-7. Folks, sports can be an idol of the heart and in most cases is.

James 1:13, “Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man.” Who is responsible here? We are. Who is not responsible here? God is not. What is the end result of this? James 1:15, “Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin when it is finished, bringeth forth death.” Notice it says if you do not deal with it, it becomes a sin of your life. The end result is death. The word here for death means destroyed or destruction. Many of God’s people are destroyed because they do not deal with their demand lusts. This certainly happened with Israel in the Old Testament, Hosea 4:1-8. Hosea 4:6, “My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge...”

Many of God’s people are destroyed because they do not deal with their strong demand lusts or idols of the heart. In fact, by allowing a social network site or anything else to be more important than walking with God will lead to destruction spiritually. The first thing I want to do in counseling with someone is to find out what the idols of the heart are. I generally find this out by asking them what makes them happy? If I ask the child in the Christian home what makes you happy and they say, “My Computer or my friends on Face Book" then we know where their heart

is. Any answer except glorifying the Lord in my life will lead me to what is controlling their life and what the spiritual issues are. Of course, the idols of the heart are selfishness in their purest form. I also ask them what do they want to accomplish in their life? When they give an answer, I ask them what that means to them. We then can find the idols of the heart because they will tell me what they are. Almost all of it deals with living for themselves or going their own way. Of course, they do not understand why they are having the problems they are having. Every spiritual problem is a matter of a heart problem. Changing behavior from an idol of the heart to having a real spiritual relationship with God and having long term change in our life has to be done Biblically. When I show someone I Corinthians 6:19-20, and ask them if the behavior they are doing glorifies God, they generally answer no. We have then identified one of the idols of the heart and generally there are more than one. **The person is struggling with any type of spiritual relationship and home relationships because of it.**

We then show them Proverbs 5:21-23, that if he will not Biblically change the cords of their sins will bind them tighter and their life will only get worse because of their failure to glorify God in their life.

To Biblically change this behavior we then go to Ephesians 4:22-24 and show them they have put it off and then put on the new and change takes place by renewing their mind (changing their thinking about it to God's thinking about it). The only way to make long term Biblical change in a person's life is to change their thinking to God's thinking. If we change their thinking to God's thinking, then we can change their behavior. Not until. When a person tells me the idol of the heart, I then take them to the passages of Scripture that deal with it. I ask them to read it and tell me what it means to them. The answers are always very revealing. I am always amazed at the power of God's Word to change a person's life if it is shown directly to them and they are seeking to know God's truth from it. I should not be surprised because I have seen it work over and over. However, the person now must be willing to change and apply what God's Word says for their life. God does not have the answer for them if they are not willing to apply His Word to their life.

James 1:16 gives us a warning about this. "Do not err, my beloved brethren." In essence, do not miss this. I am convinced that many of God's people have missed this. They do not see or understand the importance of dealing with this or training their children to deal with it in their lives. Galatians 5:16-25 gives us another explanation of this principle and the consequences involved in not understanding it.

II Corinthians 5:9, "Wherefore we labour, that whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him." Notice the word "accepted". My goal in life is to glorify Him. The word "accepted" means well pleasing or glorify. The word glorify means to give the right opinion of God.

1. My goal in life is to glorify God.
2. I please God by being like Jesus Christ.

Matthew 3:17, God the Father speaking of the Lord Jesus Christ, "in whom I am well pleased." It

is the same as II Corinthians 5:9 “accepted” when talking about us.

Romans 8:28-29, tells us to “be conformed to the image of His Son.” God knows I will not be perfect, but He does expect me to be changing, II Peter 3:18. Folks, there are only two choices on the shelf: Pleasing God or pleasing self. If you are determined to live for yourself and the idols of the heart, then life gets hard. Everything is a chore spiritually and in every other way. The person is led by their emotions. They are “feeling” oriented. They are led by their self-pleasing habits such as hours a day social networking. We cannot please God and live that way. Unfortunately many of God’s people live there and wonder what the problem is with their children, marriage, and their relationships.

Hebrews 11:6, “But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.”

Proverbs 13:13-15, 29:1, “Whoso despiseth the word shall be destroyed: but he that feareth the commandment shall be rewarded. The law of the wise is a fountain of life, to depart from the snares of death. Good understanding giveth favour: **but the way of transgressors is hard.** He that being often reproveth hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy.”

Let me ask you today. Do things seem hard to handle in your life? Are your problems overwhelming? You are going to have to deal with the idols of your heart. A social network site or the Internet can be a powerful temptation and an idol of the heart.

Hebrews 11:25, “Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season.” Dealing with these things is a choice. When I understand that this is God’s way for my life, it is an easy decision. People who are led by their emotions and are not dealing with the idols of the heart, every spiritual decision is a hard decision. In fact, every decision is a hard decision. Doing right is definitely a hard decision for them. What they participate in is a hard decision for them.

Galatians 5:17, “...so you cannot do the things that you would.” As an example a Christian knows they should be faithful in the house of God. What is the command in Hebrews 10:25, “Not forsaking...” This becomes a hard decision for people led by their emotions and are living for the idols of the heart. They do not see it as important. They are conflicted because they are not dealing with their demand lusts. Every spiritual decision is a hard one. They do not want to do it. They do not understand it is sin and God will allow them to be destroyed if they continue that behavior. The person who deals with their idols of the heart are principled people **who are leading their life by the Word of God.** Life gets easier, Matthew 11:28-30. Mark 7:21-23, “For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders. Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride foolishness: All these evil things come from within, and defile the man.”

These are some of the things God wants to change in our lives. You have to have your thinking changed or renewed by God’s Word to change the heart. **You have to understand the**

## **importance of dealing with the idols or lusts of the heart.**

Maybe by reading this article today you now understand better why your behavior has been the way it has been. Why you are not having victory in your life or an area that you have prayed and asked God to forgive you for, but nothing has changed in your life. You are living in defeat, depression, and discouragement and you do not understand why God does not change this. God will not change it until you follow what He has instructed you to do from His Word, Ephesians 4:22-24.

Do you know though there is great hope for you? God through His Word truly desires to change your life and give you victory over the idols of your heart. You can start that transforming process today, Romans 12:1-2. Do not give up and live in defeat, discouragement, and depression. It only destroys you, and your family. May God help you today to understand the wonderful and powerful changes that can take place in your life, through the understanding of dealing with the lusts (idols of your life), Romans 6:11-13, "Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin, but yield yourselves unto God as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God."

Can I participate in social networking and serve God? The answer to the question is what are your priorities? We need to guard our life at all times and not let anything including social networking become the God of our life. Many parents today do not understand how the devil works in their lives and the lives of their children. I can hear someone say I just don't see anything wrong with it. Did you ask yourself before God the questions above? I understand that unrestrained use of anything can and will destroy our life. The point is this can easily become an addiction and when people want to fight you over it, guess what? **They are addicted! Romans 6:11-19.**

**8. Is my relationship with God the most important thing in my life?** Did you know everything else can be taken away from you in your life except your relationship with God? The responsibility of the parent is to get the heart of the child and keep it. Many times the issue that causes a child's heart to wander is a parent who is a dictatorial parent without right priorities or an angry parent who did not get the heart of the child. **Every spiritual problem is a problem of the heart, Ephesians 6:6.**

The problem is the child's heart is lost by the parent. Many times the parent does not know that until the child is ready to leave the house (18) or right after they leave the house. The parent has told the child what to do, with an angry spirit, or compromised with numerous areas as I pointed out above. Let me point out here that ungodly anger has no place in the home or life of a Christian. (There are 47 different passages of scripture that deal with this telling us not to be angry or have an angry spirit), James 1:19-20, "Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath. **For the wrath of man worketh not the**

**righteousness of God.**” Proverbs 22:8, “He that soweth iniquity shall reap vanity; and **the rod of his anger shall fail.**” The child has a mechanical relationship with God, but not a real one. They are not spending time with God and letting God speak to their heart. However, the end result is you lost their heart. When the heart is lost, it then gets hardened, and then it can be stolen from you by another person or something.

I find that most Christians are not aware of this Biblical truth. **Never heard of it!** Proverbs 23:26, “My son, give me thine heart, and let my eyes observe my ways.” When I talk about this many pastors just are not aware of it as well. The parent has to get the child’s heart and keep it. Much of what has gone on today is mechanical, activity oriented, Christianity, and the child sees no power in that and they do not have a real relationship with God. They go through the motions, (they attend church, memorize scripture, go to a Christian school, numerous youth group activities, sports, programs, are home schooled, etc.) but do not have an intimate, personal, passionate relationship with God.

Christian parent, Satan is sneaky, deceptive, and desires to destroy your child. He will use anything he can to get your child’s heart to wander. Unrestrained use of the Internet and social network sites in America are certainly a big part of it. My friend, as one who counsels hundreds about this issue, understand this is a spiritual battle. Make your life decisions based on what God’s Word says. Be on guard, and remember the devil will use the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life in your life and your children’s lives. It is a wise parent who will be on guard about their child’s participation in social net working or anything else that can steal the heart. Many parents do not realize what stole their child’s heart until it is too late.

Finally, social networking like everything else in life has to be dictated by what God’s Word says. Can you do this and glorify God, have a right heart, and keep your priorities right? You must make the choice in the light of God’s Word, not your fleshly desires. If you choose to do so remember, setting proper boundaries are extremely important. My recommendation is like everything else in our life this must be controlled by the Holy Spirit. Many people think they are controlling it until the disaster strikes. If we cannot control it we need to get rid of it. Do not let it become an idol of the heart.

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