

C. Some positive impacts of Social Media

There is no doubt that there are great benefits or advantages of using social media / networking websites. Social media sites can be beneficial both to an individual and for an organization in so many ways, including the Church. Discuss some of the benefits you see in everyday life examples in the following:

- Connectivity – people can connect and communicate from all over the world at a very low cost
- Education & Awareness – people can learn and be updated on what's trending and have updated information on various topics much quicker than before
- Help for Communities – people can socially and spiritually help each other in various areas of life
- Commerce and Engagement—technology like this can liberate the small start up, home business, innovative individual, isolated artist, and more, and place them right in the marketplace against giant organizations offering leverage to remote and disadvantaged entities and people
- Christian Community & Evangelism—Social media connectivity gives greater opportunity than ever before to share truth, bring people together, and offer hope and good news to remote and local people alike.

3. PRAYER AND NOTES FOR ACTION



CONVERSATION STARTERS

The “look at me” Generation

1. Warm Up

How many selfies do you or your friends upload to a social media site per week?

The former Prime Minister, Malcolm Turnbull made it a common practice to take “selfies” on his mobile phone with people in the communities he visited. How was this received by the general public? What did it say to you about his politics?

Compare the generation of your parents or grandparents to ours today with regard to managing personal identity, image, measure of one's status, means of communication, ways of connecting, practices of commerce and marketing. What pros and cons might past generations see in our current practices?

2. The “look at me” generation

A. Labels and Judgments

The “Look at Me” generation was a phrase coined by journalists in 2015 as a label for “Millennials” now growing into their lives with the power of social media technology at their fingertips.

⇒ Aren't these labels unfair/unhelpful? Why?

B. 7 Pitfalls of Social Media to Avoid

#1: Trying to Feel Loved Through Being “Liked”

Is it not better to satisfy our yearning for validation from others through a strong foundation of identity in Christ (Romans 2:29, 2 Corinthians 5:15, Galatians 1:10), and a loving community (Col. 3:12-17)?

#2: Debating Rather Than “Sharing”

Social media is not a very good debate platform. It's too easy for people to hide behind a screen, write snappy responses they would never say to your face, or misread the tone of your responses. Consider how contemporary Paul's advice sounds, though written so long ago to churches in Asia Minor :

B. Ephesians 4:29, “Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.”

#3: The Trolls

Jesus said, “Do not give dogs what is sacred; do not throw your pearls to pigs. If you do, they may trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you to pieces” (Matthew 7:6). When you read this verse in context, it suggests that you should not waste your time correcting someone who isn't going to listen. The *Urban Dictionary* defines “troll” as, “One who purposely and deliberately starts an argument in a manner which attacks others on a forum without in any way listening to the arguments proposed by his or her peers.”

2 Timothy 2:23-24 is great social media advice, “Don't have anything to do with foolish and stupid arguments, because you know they produce quarrels. And the Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome but must be kind to everyone, able to teach, not resentful.”

#4: Stalking Rather Than “Following”

One of the greatest blessings to social media is that you can stay connected to people from your past. One of its greatest curses is that you can stay connected to people from your past!

#5: Shameless Self-Promotion

There's no Bible verse that condemns selfies. The act of taking a picture of yourself and posting it for others to see is a neutral action, meaning it is not inherently evil or good. The intent might be what God cares about though. Be honest with yourself as much as you can, and try not to be a self-promoter in the creepy sense of the word.

#6: Judging Other People's Social Media Motives

One of the easiest social media pitfalls to stumble into is judgment. The difference between discernment and judging people's motives is tricky. Discernment leads us to help and pray. Sinful judgment leads us to condemn. Only God truly knows the heart (1 Samuel 16:7).

#7: Massive Time Wasting

Laziness has existed long before social media arrived. To claim social media is the cause of slothfulness is a bit too simplistic. But it's definitely safe to say that social media can feed slothfulness. If you're prone to wasting time, tempted to only work hard when your boss is around, or you constantly need mind-numbing entertainment to help you avoid feeling crushed by life's responsibilities, your daily time on social media should be closely monitored. Perhaps ask a friend to keep you accountable.