

Be Responsible if Connected



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Being in the 21st century, has us using some form of modern technology almost every day; and we are thankful for every device God enables us to have and use—but not misuse! As with just about anything, technology can corrupt; it can be spiritually harmful; and it can be an idol if we allow it to become too important. New types of connections enable huge amounts of information, images, opinions, or entertainment to be part of our day. This compels serious warnings—*Be Responsible If Connected!*

There are millions of websites, Twitter feeds, podcasts—You Tube videos or Instagram photos we have as *favorites* because we like them; find them interesting, informative, and entertaining. As with any information, there are dangerous areas that we must be aware of—and avoid! Online information can be *helpful* if used properly; but very *harmful* if used improperly.

We must pray every *day* for guidance every *second*—asking God to show us if our use of social media, web searches, online games, or anything is out of balance with the responsibilities we have to our family, friends, and children. The Holy Spirit is ready to *show* us if our online activity needs to be changed—we just need a willingness to *be shown!*

It is all too easy, to spend all too much time, getting too much information online, instead of interacting with others and speaking personally with friends who may need encouragement from God's Word. Hebrews 10:25 "*Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing,*

but let us encourage one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching."

Attending church services with other believers gives that opportunity to encourage someone who may need encouragement. Close community reflects the Trinity—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—2 Corinthians 13:14 "*May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.*" 1 Corinthians 12:20 We are "*many members, yet but one body;*" 27 "*and each of you is a part of it.*"

Social media can be time-consuming—it is great to stay informed, but wanting to keep up with everything, can be exhausting, and we find ourselves spending more and more time, with more and more connections to—such things as: Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram posts—instead of interacting. We can be seeking online information more than seeking Matthew 6:33 "*the kingdom of God, and his righteousness.*"

It is not a sin to *use* technology but it *is* a sin to *misuse* it. The two natures within us need to be fed—and the one we feed the *most* is the one that gains *control*—of our choices. Everything we *do* and everything we *view* is Hebrews 4:13 "*open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account.*"

Being *connected* means being *responsible* and alert every second to Satan's attempts to *attract* us, and then *lure* us onto areas that would defile our conscience. Matthew 24:4 "*Take heed that no man deceives you.*" We must live a *holy* life in an increasingly *unholy* world. It is *everyone's* responsibility to be sure that every *click* and every *tap*—be according to God's will and Word.

As a believer today, we face unprecedented challenges, and being connected offers *new* ways to feed *old* sins. Mark 7:21-23 "*From within, out of a person's heart, come evil thoughts, [fornication], theft, murder, adultery, greed, wickedness, deceit, eagerness for lustful pleasure, envy, slander, pride, and foolishness. All these vile things come*

from within; they are what defile you and make you unacceptable to God." Being Connected means Being Responsible.

The more *time* we spend connected, the more *time* Satan has to entice us to look at images or read material that would defile our conscience. The more time we spend connected, the greater possibility there is for Satan to have us trespass onto forbidden areas—making it so easy to wander outside scriptural boundaries.

The prophet Ezra prayed Ezra 9:15, "*We are before thee in our trespasses: for we cannot stand before thee because of this.*" We would *not* be able to stand righteous before the Lord on the Day of Judgment, if we deliberately trespass onto forbidden areas when connected. We must *think* before connecting and surfing aimlessly—asking: why we are doing what we are doing.

We are responsible to heed warnings of being connected. Anyone who has read the Bible has been *warned*—1 Corinthians 6:18 "*Flee fornication*"—don't linger; don't experiment; don't test our ability to resist; just *flee* and *run* from the material or images, as Joseph did. One *minute* we can be looking at good material, and the next *hour* looking at vile images—Satan makes it so easy to do.

A young member shares some thoughts—quote After reading "The Internet and Eternal Interests" *these things came to mind—We are to be wary of what is viewed online; particularly immoral web sites. To list all the sins available online would make a very long list indeed, but some other points could be mentioned. Being part of this computer-literate generation, I have witnessed much more than just viewing things that could be a spiritual hindrance. What is easily typed or said online—hiding behind our keyboard and mask of a screen—can cut very deeply into the emotions and feelings of others.*

The gossip associated with texting and blogging is as serious as any other type, and it is so easy to do behind someone's back. With this vast array of communication possibilities at our finger tips, it is very easy to become ensnared by worldly people, who do not share our spiritual interests; or to have friends that we would rather others not know we have.

There is also the potential of addictive online games that can take us away from the family, or from time with the Lord and the reading His Word. Even safe movies and good literature online, are as easily addictive as anything else; and the advertisements on just about any website, are as potentially dangerous as the commercials viewed on TV.

Scripture verses quoted were ^{1 Peter 5:8-9} “*Curb every passion [be sober], and be on the alert [vigilant—cautious; watchful]. Your great accuser [adversary—enemy], the Devil, is going about like a roaring lion to see whom he can devour [looking for some victim to devour].* ⁹ *Withstand [resist] him, firm in your faith; knowing that your brethren in other parts of the world are passing through just the same experiences [afflictions; and temptations].*”

It is a battle for the mind—Satan wants to have our *attention*; then steal our *mind*; and finally, our *soul*. Jesus warned ^{John 10:10} “*The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.*”

If God has our *mind*, He has our *emotions*, our *desires*, and our *time*. The one who has our mind, has the advantage—the mind is where we decide. Satan has caught many off guard through the onslaught of the media—a media that overflows like raging flood waters every day.

There is what is called *moral drift* in today's world—Do those things that once *offended* us, now *entertain* us; do we enjoy programs, films,

shows, or books that have values that are *opposed* to Bible teaching and example! We should ask those questions, and then give very honest answers. Modern media has *reset* the *shock* threshold—the level of violence and profanity has no limit today.

In a call to confession and repentance, the prophet said ^{Ezekiel 23:21} “*You longed for the lewdness of your youth.*” We need a spiritual awakening. With the Spirit's help, we can conduct our connected activities and viewing preferences scripturally—but we must *ask* for His help. ^{Psalms 101:3} “*I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes: I hate the work of them that turn aside; it shall not cleave to me.*”

Young teens need guidelines set by the family—whether to be online or not; whether they can make voice calls, but many now have iPads, iPods, or Tablets that connect through Wi-Fi—therefore giving them access to many types of social media—photos; blogs, fashions, and attitudes.

The problem is that most of the individuals with whom we can connect, have no desire to follow Bible instruction. This is obvious from the words those on social media write, or what pics they post—many indicating that they have no desire to quote Scripture verses to encourage, or to dress modestly according to Bible instructions, but only to impress those who view their photos, or to influence those who read their blogs.

Every individual, who has a device capable of connecting to any type of social media, is responsible for the choices they make; the images they view; and the words they read—not to mention that we are *all* responsible for what we say, write, or post that would affect others.

The apostle says ^{1 Thessalonians 5:8} “*Since we belong to the day, let us be self-controlled [or be responsible when connected], putting on faith and love as a breastplate [of protection against*

Satan who entices us onto forbidden areas], and the hope of salvation as a helmet”—of protection against so many temptations facing young people today.

The devil makes it easy to hide behind the mask of our screen or tablet, and to say things that tear down someone's reputation or character. Satan makes it easy to *say* or *write* or *text* something that ought *not* be said, written, or sent. The apostle says ^{1 Thessalonians 5:11} “*Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing*”—if we are doing.

This is the *connected* generation, so we are *responsible* for our actions, words, photos; our comments and opinions. Before ever tapping “*send*,” let us pause and think about what we just wrote, and ask: Is *this* what I would want someone to say about *me*? Is this going to *build up*, or *tear* someone *down*? Should I send what I just texted—or would I, and everyone else, be better off if I left it unsaid and unsent! Let us tap many more “*backspace*,” and very few “*send!*”

^{1 John 2:15-16} “*Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16 For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world.*”

We are *responsible* and we are *obligated* to the One who paid for our soul. ^{1 Corinthians 6:20} “*For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God*”—when connected via social media sources. Eternity is way too *long*; and horrors of Hell are way too *horrible* to be wrong about the seriousness of having a defiled conscience; an impure heart; or a corrupted mind! ^{Philippians 2:5} “*Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.*”



www.fcgchurch.org

PO Box 24283; Phila., PA 19120

info@fcgchurch.org