

## Six Traps to Avoid While Using Social Media

### 1. Don't Instigate Quarrelling

*“Remind them to be subject to rulers, to authorities, to be obedient, to be ready for every good deed, to malign no one, to be peaceable, gentle, showing every consideration for all men.” (Titus 3:1–2)*

*“Reject a factious man after a first and second warning,”  
(Titus 3:10)*

*“Therefore I want the men in every place to pray, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and dissension.” (1 Timothy 2:8)*

*“not addicted to wine or pugnacious, but gentle, peaceable, free from the love of money.” (1 Timothy 3:3)*

*“But refuse foolish and ignorant speculations, knowing that they produce quarrels.” (2 Timothy 2:23)*

### 2. Don't Be Impulsive

*“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.” (Galatians 5:22–23)*

*“This you know, my beloved brethren. But everyone must be quick to hear, slow to speak and slow to anger; for the anger of man does not achieve the righteousness of God. Therefore, putting aside all filthiness and all that remains of wickedness, in humility receive the word implanted, which is able to save your souls.” (James 1:19–21)*

### 3. Don't Be Disrespectful

*“But refuse foolish and ignorant speculations, knowing that they produce quarrels. The Lord's bond-servant must not be quarrelsome,*



*but be kind to all, able to teach, patient when wronged, with gentleness correcting those who are in opposition, if perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth,”*  
(2 Timothy 2:23–25)

*“Keep your behavior excellent among the Gentiles, so that in the thing in which they slander you as evildoers, they may because of your good deeds, as they observe them, glorify God in the day of visitation.”* (1 Peter 2:12)

*“Let no one look down on your youthfulness, but rather in speech, conduct, love, faith and purity, show yourself an example of those who believe.”* (1 Timothy 4:12)

*“to malign no one, to be peaceable, gentle, showing every consideration for all men.”* (Titus 3:2)

*“Do not speak against one another, brethren. He who speaks against a brother or judges his brother, speaks against the law and judges the law; but if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge of it.”* (James 4:11)

#### **4. Don’t Gossip, Lie, or Exaggerate the Truth**

*“He who goes about as a slanderer reveals secrets, Therefore do not associate with a gossip.”* (Proverbs 20:19)

*“But avoid worldly and empty chatter, for it will lead to further ungodliness,”* (2 Timothy 2:16)

*“But have nothing to do with worldly fables fit only for old women. On the other hand, discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness;”*  
(1 Timothy 4:7)

*“If anyone thinks himself to be religious, and yet does not bridle his tongue but deceives his own heart, this man’s religion is worthless.”*  
(James 1:26)



*“But I tell you that every careless word that people speak, they shall give an accounting for it in the day of judgment.” (Matthew 12:36)*

## 5. Don't Seek Attention

*“Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment, so that it will give grace to those who hear.”*  
(Ephesians 4:29)

*“Therefore encourage one another and build up one another, just as you also are doing.” (1 Thessalonians 5:11)*

*“So then we pursue the things which make for peace and the building up of one another.” (Romans 14:19)*

## SEVEN POSITIVE WAYS CHRISTIANS CAN USE SOCIAL MEDIA

1. **Pray before you post.** If I have learned anything about social media, I have learned that I'm not the smartest guy around. I need God's wisdom to communicate in such a way that brings honor and glory to Him. That is why I must begin with prayer.

*“Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.” (Philippians 4:6)*

2. **Encourage others on social media.** Some of the greatest encouragements I receive come from people on social media. I am so thankful for the many Christians who use this platform in obedience to the Word of God.

*“Therefore encourage one another and build one another up as you are already doing” (1 Thessalonians 5:11)*



3. **Respond with a gentle spirit.** Let our desire be to win hearts rather than to win arguments.

*“A gentle answer turns away wrath, But a harsh word stirs up anger.”* (Proverbs 15:1)

4. **Remember who is watching you on social media.** The words we Christians say to one another and to others are on display for the world to see. This platform is an incredible opportunity to demonstrate the love of Christ in action.

*“And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do.”* (Hebrews 4:13)

5. **Use social media as an opportunity to demonstrate the fruit of the Spirit.** God is doing great works through those on social media who strive to demonstrate the fruit of the Spirit every time they post:

*“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control”* (Galatians 5:22).

6. **Create a prayer ministry through social media.** Make it a point to pray for many of those you read or watch on social media. Let them know you are praying for them.

*“Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another so that you may be healed. The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much.”* (James 5:16)

7. **Seek to create unity in the body of Christ through social media.** For sure, there are many who are divisive. But even more of us can be a mighty force for God to bring unity to Christians across the world.

*“Above all, put on love which is the perfect bond of unity”* (Colossians 3:14).



# General Guidelines for Using Social Media

- **Listen before you send.** The internet invites you to broadcast your thoughts to no one in particular. That's not biblical. Listen to what's going on.
- **Ask before you assume.** So many arguments happen online because people assume they know what someone else means. Take the time to clarify before you argue.
- **Verify before you repost.** Just because someone you know has posted something that sounds really good doesn't mean it's true. Do some homework before reposting.
- **Be kind, courteous, and respectful.** Even when we share the truth, we are to do it in love. In everything we do, we must represent and attract people to Jesus.
- **Care about your tone.** On social media, this includes your use of capital letters and punctuation. Would you YELL at them IN PERSON?????
- **Always take the high road.** Social media can be a cesspool of sniping. Don't engage. If someone does you wrong, do them right in return (or don't do anything at all).
- **Assume that everything you post and share online will become public.** If you don't want everyone to know, then don't share it on any form of social media.
- **Approach controversy with caution.** The Bible praises discretion. Some "points" aren't worth it. Be knowledgeable and well-supported. Don't be presumptuous or flippant.
- **Use private groups where needed.** To communicate with youth, kids, recovery groups, etc., find the most private, safest method possible.



- **Set boundaries.** Be extremely mindful of the age and gender of the person(s) with which you carry online conversations.
- **Set limits.** Self-control applies to all things, including your social media usage. Watch the amount of time you spend consuming social media and posting it.
- **Don't break news unless it's yours.** If you aren't 100% certain that news about a person or event is supposed to be public, don't share it.
- **Protect individuals and kids.** Don't say something that would put someone else in an awkward or compromised position. Don't reveal the location of kids or teens. **\*\*Don't post a picture of a child unless you have the parent's expressed permission.\*\***
- **Monitor activity on your accounts.** People are constantly posting inappropriate items to others' accounts; you need to take it down and block the offender immediately.
- **Think before you click "send."** Think about your state of mind and your motives when composing your post; reread the content. Are you sure you want to do this?
- **Be truthful.** Don't be lazy or misleading; do the work necessary to make sure that whatever you post is true, accurate, and clearly written.
- **Respect copyrights and intellectual property.** Give credit where credit is due and include links to your sources where possible.
- **Care enough to proofread.** You don't have to use perfect syntax, but you should always reread your post for obvious or confusing grammatical errors.
- **When in doubt, delete.** If you're not utterly convinced that your post is "right," just don't send it. It is *not* better to ask forgiveness; the internet is not forgiving.



- **Everyone can see what you "like".** Be cautious with your posted reactions to other posts. We can see what you've liked and what you've tagged to read later.
- **Promote the church and the gospel.** If there are good things going on or matters for praise, don't hesitate to share them. Don't be ashamed of the gospel or your church!
- **Share your insights and opinions.** That is one way we "season the world with salt" and "let our light shine before people." But make it clear that it is your opinion.
- **Post content that is meaningful.** You can't make disciples through small talk. Sure, create posts that are humorous, but also posts that are truthful and important.
- **Be mindful of your audience.** Consider the age, gender, and social status of anyone who might read your content. Be appropriate for the widest audience.

## Resources:

*The Tech-Wise Family: Everyday Steps for Putting Technology in its Proper Place*, by Andy Crouch, Baker Books, Amazon price: \$9.79.

*My Tech-wise Life Growing Up and Making Choices in a World of Devices*, by Andy and Amy Crouch, Baker Books, Amazon price: \$8.00.

*12 Ways Your Phone is Changing You*, by Tony Reinke, Crossway, Amazon price: \$9.99.

*Screens and Teens: Connecting with our Kids in a Wireless World*, by Kathy Koch, Moody Publishers, Amazon price: \$8.99.

*Everything Smartphone Toolkit*, a free online resource to guide parents to help their teens use their phones in a positive way. Topics include: 1) Is there a perfect age to get a smartphone? 2) Anxious for nothing.



3) Smartphone Safety 101. 4) Crushed. 5) The Girls are Online. 6) Gen Z knows what they are missing. 7) No one wants to be an IPAD Kid. 8) Inside the Parent-Powered, Crowdsourced Movement to Delay Phone Use and others. [www.axis.org](http://www.axis.org)

