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Facebook...or *The Book*

by Teresa Hampton

It is one of the wildest fads these days! Facebook. People develop a wide network of “friends” all over the world. It has dramatically changed the way people socially interact. The potential for doing good with a tool like Facebook is huge. Christians use it to communicate with members about immediate needs, prayer requests, mission reports, etc. They use this network for comfort, encouragement, education, and involvement in the church. It is a good thing when we use modern technology to do the Lord’s work.

There is, however, one important question we should ask about any innovation or new gadget. How much of my day is devoted to it? The clock is ticking. We must remember that Satan uses any means possible to get us to rationalize what we do and rationalize the amount of time it requires, whether it’s Facebook or any other form of entertainment.

Do I spend the same amount of time reading or studying the Bible that I spend on Facebook? Is my Facebook time used to instruct, exhort, comfort, etc.? Or, has it become a tool of the devil, absorbing my time, creating a within me busybody or voyeuristic attitude? Am I addicted? These are questions we should ask ourselves regularly. As children of God we must evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of any innovation, especially one that has such a broad affect on many areas of our lives and on our soul.

Time is a valuable commodity, no, a *blessing* given to us by God. Every minute of every day is a gift that should be used with wisdom and discretion. Without question, the best book with which to spend those precious minutes is *The Book*, the Bible!

Today’s Verse: *I must work the works of Him who sent Me while it is day; the night is coming when no one can work* (John 9:4).

Bonus: check out next page, an article about Facebook etiquette by Steve Higginbotham

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Facebook Etiquette For Christians

Steve Higginbotham [Culture](#) 2012-04-14

I've been a Facebook user since 2006. Since that time, I would consider myself a moderate user (my children would choose the term "creeper"). Whatever term best identifies me, I've been around long enough to be "put off," "disappointed," "embarrassed," and "shocked" by some of the things I've read and seen. Therefore, I'm going to share a few "Etiquette Tips" for Christian Facebook users. Now, I'm no "Emily Post" (for those of you who don't know who Emily Post is, Wiki her), but I do think the following suggestions would go a long way in making Facebook a more productive experience. So here's my "Top Ten List."

1. **Don't criticize the church or your brethren.** Remember, the world is looking on! When King David learned of Saul's death, he instructed Israel to "tell it not in Gath...lest they rejoice" ([2 Samuel 1:20](#)). Gath was a Philistine city, the home of Goliath. David didn't want the sad news of Saul's death to be used as an opportunity for his enemies to rejoice. Can you identify problems and imperfections in your local congregation? Of course you can, because the church consists of imperfect people. But may I suggest that when you are able to identify weaknesses and failures among your brethren, "Tell it not on Facebook." After all, Jesus has a better way of dealing with it, doesn't he? ([Matthew 18:15-17](#)).
2. **Don't constantly whine.** Or would it be more biblical to say "murmur and complain" ([Philippians 2:14](#))? Now, I know there are times when you want to share the events of your life with others, and sometimes those events are burdensome. That's not what I'm talking about. In fact, one of the redeeming qualities of Facebook is that it can be a forum to encourage, edify, and bear one another's burdens ([Gal. 6:1](#)). I'm not talking about one who uses Facebook for those purposes. I'm talking about the constant complainer. The one who seems to be unable to count his blessings, but sure can count his/her problems. Listen, if you're a Christian, regardless of what your problems are, your blessings infinitely exceed your trials.
3. **Don't take cryptic "pot shots" at some unnamed person** who, when they read your post, will know you're talking about them. If you have something to say to an individual, go to that individual and don't take your problem public ([Matthew 5:23-24](#)). By going public, you only peak the curiosity of others and potentially and unnecessarily pull them into something that is none of their business.
4. **Think before you post.** Innuendo's and off-color comments should never be posted ([Ephesians 4:29](#)).
5. **Don't post inappropriate pictures.** Pictures showing you breaking the law, abusing alcohol, wearing immodest clothing, etc. damage your influence and do not glorify Christ. Better yet, do not engage in these activities in the first place.
6. **Do some self-evaluation.** Look at your profile. What do you have to say about yourself. If you proudly identify yourself as a Christian and the Bible as one of your

favorite books, then please make sure the rest of what you like is consistent with that profession. Saying you're a Christian and love the Bible, while in the next breath identifying as your favorites some of the most salacious books, movies, and performers causes others to blaspheme God ([Romans 2:24](#)).

7. **Don't use Facebook as an escape from reality.** If you're unhappy about your marriage, get off Facebook and work on your marriage! I know of too many stories where Facebook became the medium for adultery and broken homes. You know why you're "friending" people. You know why you're talking with them more and more. Stop deceiving yourself, and flee from that which can flame inappropriate desires and actions ([2 Timothy 2:22](#)).
8. **Be kind** ([Ephesians 4:32](#)). I've sometimes witnessed a person express some biblical error or misunderstanding only to be met with harsh and judgmental words. The fact that one may be in error doesn't imply sinister motives. I'm convinced that the impersonal nature of the Internet emboldens people to act "bigger," and "tougher" than they really are. I once had a dog that when she was in the safety of her cage sounded as though she would eat a person alive. But let her out of the cage, and she became as meek and cowardly as can be. I'm convinced that some of the harsh, hateful, judgmental words that I have seen typed would never be spoken if they were face to face with their offender. Paul instructs us to preach with all "longsuffering" ([2 Timothy 4:2](#)). That's true of what we preach as well as what we type.
9. **Don't gossip.** The rules of the tongue apply to the keyboard as well. Give care that what you say is true as well as helpful. If James were to write [James 3:6](#) today, it might read as follows, "And the keyboard is a fire, a world of iniquity...". Lying, gossiping, stating as truth what we do not know to be true, etc. are as wrong on Facebook as they are when speaking to another face to face.
10. **And finally, use it for good** ([1 Corinthians 9:22](#)). Speak of your faith often, encourage others, point people to Jesus, take advantage of opportunities to speak for Jesus, and let people see that there is an undeniable family resemblance between you and your heavenly Father.

If we would do these things, Facebook would be a better place. Come to think of it, if we would do these things the world would be a better place.

Do you have any further "etiquette" suggestions? Share them in the comments section.

Furthermore, if you think these things need to be said, share this on your page for others to read.

11. Don't hold your FB friends hostage by telling them they (don't love God, don't this . . . , don't that. . .) if they don't forward or repost or like your current posting.

12. Here's one I might add to the list, but some might disagree: if you're going to pray to God, pray to Him. There's no need to pray to God via Facebook. It reeks of "praying to be heard/seen of men" to me. If you want to ask for prayers, fine. If you want to tell what you need prayers for, that's your prerogative. But to offer prayers to God on Facebook?