

DWELLING IN GOD'S WORD

SOCIAL MEDIA – UGLY OR A BLESSING?



by Pastor Richard Schwedes

The term 'social media' refers to a broad range of applications, platforms and programs that enable users to generate their own content to share information, ideas, personal messages, videos and other content to online communities. A key element of social media is that the users of these platforms mostly determine the content. Some of the common social media platforms include Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, YouTube, WhatsApp, WeChat, Snapchat, Twitter, Reddit, LinkedIn and Pinterest.

This Bible study intends to provide an insight into how social media can be both ugly and a blessing, and how we as Christians can respond so that our interactions on social media glorify God and help show love to him and others.

To start, here are some questions to consider:

How do you currently use social media?

What are some of the blessings you experience with social media?

What are some of the challenges you see with it?

INTO THE WORD: SOCIAL MEDIA – IS IT FROM GOD?

Some people love social media and can see blessings in using it, while others despise social media, even suggesting that it is not godly.

Take some time to reflect on and discuss the following:

- Colossians 1:15–17
- 1 Timothy 4:1–4

As you do, reflect on and discuss in what ways is social media godly and good?

SOCIAL MEDIA – WHY CAN IT BE UGLY?

Some people have had negative experiences with social media. Have you had any negative experiences? Have you heard of any negative experiences?

Let's take some time to reflect on texts to consider why such negative experiences may happen:

- Genesis 50:20
- Colossians 3:5–11
- James 3:7–10
- Galatians 5:19–26
- 1 Corinthians 3:1–4

Consider what they are saying to you as to:

Why can social media be ugly at times?

How do we at times get caught up in some of the ugly moments on social media?

SOCIAL MEDIA – HOW CAN IT BE A BLESSING?

Social media has also created many blessings for people, including churches. People have reconnected with each other, been able to meet with people from around the world to explore and discuss issues of interest, and even be easily kept informed about what is happening.

Let's take some time to reflect on the following texts, to consider how social media can be a blessing:

- Matthew 22:37–40
- Ephesians 5:15,16
- John 13:34,35
- Colossians 3:12–17
- 1 Corinthians 10:31–11:1
- Colossians 4:2–6
- Romans 8:26–28

As you read these texts consider:

How are they applicable to you in using social media?
How can we use social media in a God-pleasing way?
What blessings can social media bring, not only to you but also others?

THE WORD BECOMING REAL

What are three things from this study that help you in using social media? How might your congregation or church group use social media to be a blessing to others and reflect God's love and grace? When using social media, what are some important things to remember?

Pastor Richard Schwedes is committed to using the internet for God's ministry and mission to reach a broader range of people. His congregations – St Paul's Sydney and Redeemer Narrabeena – have responded to the COVID-19 restrictions with worship live-streamed and on YouTube, Zoom Bible studies and church council meetings, Facebook devotions and updates, weekly update emails, pastoral care callers and, for those without internet, some mailed out at-home resources.