Social Networking, Part 5 (Solutions)

Philippians 2:4-8 Wed, December 17, 2014

*Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.*

# Introduction

1. Last week, I laid out the specific problems that we encounter with social networking.

* I certainly haven’t given an exhaustive list of the problems --- as media changes, different problems will surface, some bigger problems will be minimized, and other small problems will emerge.
* I have had two goals: first, to point out that there are problems, and to point out the problems that are most likely to be present in every form of social networking.
* And secondly, my bigger goal has been to get you to recognize the ways that social networking wants to take us, and to resist that.
* We must not become servants to our tools. Our tools must serve us.
* When they become lord, we must cast them down. For some, that means deleting a Facebook account.
* But for most, it means examining hearts and changing habits.

1. Now, tonight I want to offer some solutions – solutions in the form of *mindsets*.

* Fundamentally, these are *worldview* solutions --- learning to view social networking through a filter --- the filter of God’s Word, our Biblical lens.

1. But before I begin tonight, I need to make a few corrections…

* First, I discovered today that YouTube does in fact have a thumbs-up and a thumbs-down (which is a dislike button);
* Secondly, I learned from our staff that you can “unlike” on Facebook – the like button becomes an unlike button. So you can in fact “unlike” something, but only after you like it.

# Division

Last week, I pointed out 2 basic features of the Facebook problem --- self-worship, and relationship worship (which becomes a special kind of self-worship).

Tonight, I want to offer 2 solutions to these problems --- this is social networking for Christians.

## The Solutions to our Problem

1. The image problem is not solved through anonymity --- you should not need an assumed name in order to avoid image problems.

* One of the more troubling aspects of the World Wide Web – at least for me – has been the great ability it has given us to be anonymous.
* When people hide their identity on the world wide web, I have *never* seen it come to anything good. *Ever.*
* If you don’t believe that you can be yourself on a particular website, then what are you doing on it?
* If you need to hide your identity, then chances are that you should just stay off.
* But what happens when people hide their identity? They feel no inhibitions about joining conversations that they would join if their identity were known.
* The one thing I will say about people who are anonymous on the Internet – what is in their heart really comes out.
* The problem is, they lose accountability. They are not as careful with what they say or how they say it, but nobody has the opportunity to correct them.
* Be a public Christian. And remember that you are always accountable for what you say and do, for sites you visit and conversations you join.
* Mt 12:36 But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment.

1. Solving the image problem through glory-seeking.

* That might sound strange, but let me explain what I mean.
* Glory-seeking is inescapable --- it is not *whether* you will seek glory, but *whose* glory will you seek.
* Every person seeks glory. Look at Romans 2:5-11 with me, and notice what the Bible says there…

Ro 2:7 To them who by patient continuance in well doing **seek for glory and honour** and immortality, eternal life:

8 But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath,

9 Tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile;

10 **But glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good**, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile:

11 For there is no respect of persons with God.

* The reason we have an image problem is because we seek glory in the wrong place and *for the wrong person.*
* When you seek glory for God in everything, do you see what the Bible promises? God will give *you* glory.

1Pe 5:6 Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time:

Ps 75:10 All the horns of the wicked also will I cut off; but the horns of the righteous shall be exalted.

Mt 23:12 And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted.

* This is a distinctly Christian principle that every Christian needs to get a firm grasp of --- that the way to the top is by diving to the bottom.

Php 2:1 If (since) there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if (since) any comfort of love, if (since) any fellowship of the Spirit, if (since) any bowels and mercies,

2 Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind.

3 Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves.

4 Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.

5 Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:

6 Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God:

7 But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:

8 And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

* You all know that the next verse tells us that it was for this reason that God highly exalted Christ.
* Jesus taught us this lesson when he girded himself with a towel and washed His disciples feet.
* This was something never heard of until Jesus Christ introduced it to His disciples.
* I appreciate all the questions I have gotten from this discussion – it means that you are thinking about these things and trying to apply them to yourself.
* A recurring question I have gotten is about how to apply this to a business model.
* I want everyone who is in business to learn to think of your business in the right terms.
* As in everything else, the way to get to the top is not by boosting your ratings or getting plenty of artificial praise or coercing people into “liking” your business.
* In part, we have to be patient. Rome, as they say, wasn’t built in a night. You shouldn’t expect your business to be #1 in your first year – or even in your first five years.
* You shouldn’t think of climbing to the top through self-promotion.
* How did Jesus teach us to be the greatest of all?
* Mt 23:11 But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant.
* Mt 20:26 But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; 27 And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: 28 Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.
* Mr 10:42 But Jesus called them to him, and saith unto them, Ye know that they which are accounted to rule over the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and their great ones exercise authority upon them. 43 But so shall it not be among you: but whosoever will be great among you, shall be your minister: 44 And whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all. 45 For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.
* All four gospels have a different rendering of this principle. I recommend that you study it.
* And so here is the answer to the image problem --- promote the right image.
* It is the image of Christ that you bear before the world. Wear it faithfully.
* What is His image? When He came to this earth, what did He do? The Bible says that “He made Himself of *no reputation.*”
* This is a failing business model – the world would tell you that. But then again, what do they know?
* What image did Christ present to the world? He took upon Him the form of a servant.
* In everything we do, we must serve Jesus Christ first. I have said this enough times that you can quote me on it --- but make sure that you look at your vocation rightly.
* Your vocation is your calling – it is the way that God has called you to serve Him.
* Some you serve God by repairing airplanes. Some by washing windows. Some by welding. Some by maintaining buildings. Some by building buildings. Some by delivering roofing supplies.
* Some serve God by teaching children --- not one of us serves God any less with our vocation than another.
* Make sure that you are serving God in whatever you do. And make sure that you serve God by serving people.
* Remember what Jesus said? “And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward.” Mt 10:42
* Jesus showed us the way to reach the top, and that is by diving to the bottom.
* But if you are diving to the bottom *in order to get to the top* and not in order to serve God, then you should figure on staying down at the bottom until you get your priorities right.
* One thing I have learned --- it is better to stay at the bottom longer than you wanted than to be promoted to the top sooner than you are ready.
* I don’t mean to limit this to business --- every profile on the World Wide Web should have one primary goal in mind: and that is to faithfully bear the image of Christ in front of the world.
* Social networking is a public thing --- the relationships on social networking are *public* relationships. You have *publicly* identified with the people that you are in a relationship with on Facebook (and etc.).
* Make sure that your public profile declares the glory of God.

1. Solving the relationship problem through friend-seeking.

* I have called social networking the modern-day tower of Babel --- building a false unity, a singular mind.
* You might be tempted to think that there is nothing sinister going on among the men who have created these things.
* But they are very committed, even *evangelical* in their quest for world peace and unity.
* They certainly believe that these things will enable them to escape the problems of humanity, to rid the world of war through these mediums.
* They believe that their devices and technologies will usher in a new world order of peace and unity.
* God wants unity – but not an artificial, man-made unity.
* The unity offered through social networking is not really a false unity – it is a *rival* unity.
* A Christless world seeks solutions apart from Jesus Christ --- that is natural for the natural man.
* Christians must recognize this. And we must resist this tendency.
* Your most important relationships are not on Facebook. Facebook is not the most important place for you to build or develop your relationships.
* At the risk of sounding like a pastor, let me just say that your most important relationships are in church.
* God’s New Testament churches are the anti-Tower of Babel.
* Just as God undid the Tower of Babel on the Day of Pentecost, when He sent the Holy Spirit, so God empowered His disciples and commissioned them to go out and build a new kind of unity…
* A unity in Christ.
* The church is to be the gathering place for the people of God.
* And in the New Testament, we see that God presented a radical idea for unity. And a unity that was so radical that we still struggle to understand it.
* It is in the context of the New Testament church that God intends to build a human brotherhood that eliminates the distinctions of social condition, of race, of nationality and even of gender.

Ga 3:26 For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.

27 For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.

28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.

* I have mentioned several times the way that social networking is producing a universal mind --- you should not think that this is an unusual observation.
* The truth is, the cutting edge of technology now concerns itself with the noosphere – an attempt by men to *harness* this universal mind and put it to use in building an even greater unity.
* I don’t know that I can explain it adequately. I only know that men are seeking even now to capitalize on the collected thoughts of individuals and use it to produce a universal mind.
* We change the earth, and we are changed.
* God has set up a rival unity – heaven’s rebellion against the world.

1Co 1:10 Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, **that ye all speak the same thing,** and that there be no divisions among you; but **that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment**.

* So the first thing is to seek unity in the right place.
* But then secondly, we really must seek to solve our relationship problems, not by *collecting* friends on Facebook, but by *being* friends (everywhere we go).
* An apple pie delivered to the home of a friend in need beats a poke on Facebook, or a like, or even a comment like “I’m praying for you.”
* It would be better for you to go to someone’s house and pray with them than to put a comment on their Facebook page that you are praying for them.
* Along with this, we need to remember that the rules for friendship apply to social networking as they do in every other area of life.
* There is not a place on this earth where we ever escape the law of God.

1. ~~Solving the knowledge problem through God-seeking.~~

* ~~Ways of knowing~~

1. ~~Solving the sin problem through law-seeking.~~

# Conclusion