



## **The New Distraction: How Social Media is Affecting How We See Ourselves in Christ**

### **Focus Verse:**

*“And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.”*

(Romans 12:2, NKJV)

Social media is everywhere. Everyone posts everything, from what they eat to what they do.

If you want to know about someone’s life, look them up on social media, and you can find out about their life, some of which you will wish you didn’t know.

This can become a problem for some Christians because instead of spending time in prayer, we check our phones; instead of reading our Bibles, we review the latest social updates. Some may pay more attention to social media updates than what the preacher is saying!

**“They are of the world. Therefore they speak as of the world, and the world hears them.”**

(I John 4:5, NKJV)

When we would rather post personal stuff about our life for strangers to see or comment on than share it with our loved ones, we might have a problem.

Instead of talking to a loved one or friend about what we’re dealing with or what’s going on in our lives, we post on social media, eliminating the need for healthy communication.

I found myself in a position where social media was damaging my self-esteem and leading me to sin by fostering envy towards other people’s lives and making me question why I didn’t possess similar things.

Many women suffer from body image issues associated with the effects of social media consumption. After God showed me my worth and reminded me that I am blessed, I realized I had fallen for a trick of the enemy. I repented and decided I wouldn't let social media distract me from my blessings.

**“And He said to them, “Take heed and beware of covetousness, for one’s life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses.”**

Luke 12:15 NKJV

Social media can destroy our self-esteem and tempt us to do things contrary to the Word of God, such as comparing ourselves or our life to someone else who we think has it all together. In many cases, it's an illusion not based on facts.

**“Now godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out.”**

(I Timothy 6:6-7, NKJV)

I like to call it the smoke and mirrors effect. It's like going to a concert before the artist comes out. They add smoke, mirrors, and lights—an illusion to generate anticipation for the show. Without the special effects, many of these concerts wouldn't be anything special.

**“For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known.”**

(I Corinthians 13:12, NKJV)

The enemy can use social media to make us feel bad because either God hasn't blessed us with the same things that others have, or we think we're not good enough to receive a blessing.

**“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.”**

(I John 2:15, NKJV)

### **Life Reflection:**

Has social media impacted your life in negative ways? Make a list:

Some people may post things about their life that they later regret, mistakenly believing they have deleted them. However, these posts are permanently recorded and cannot be erased.

We share things about our life with complete strangers to get followers, likes, or comments. But can I remind us that Jesus shared His personal life with only twelve disciples?

I don't have many social media followers, and at one point, it discouraged me because I thought my worth was tied to how many followers I had. Until I realized that God doesn't care about how many people follow me on social media. He cares about me personally following Him.

**“Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and everyone who loves Him who begot also loves him who is begotten of Him.”**

I John 5:1 NKJV

Social media has many positive applications. Churches use social media to inform members of upcoming events and post encouraging Bible verses. It can also be a great witnessing tool when used with wisdom. However, too much social media can cause problems. One way I try to eliminate how social media negatively affects not just my personal life but my relationship with God is to limit my time on social media.

**“Because from the least of them even to the greatest of them, Everyone is given to covetousness; And from the prophet even to the priest, Everyone deals falsely.”**

(Jeremiah 6:13, NKJV)

#### **Life Reflection:**

What are some positive ways you can start using social media?

When we're endlessly scrolling, we can lose sight of the fact that God has given us a life in Him to live abundantly, to be the light in the darkness. We must guard against being more concerned about what everybody else is doing than we are about what God has called us to do.

As children of God, we are to be like Him. When we're constantly posting and scrolling, we disconnect ourselves from a healthy, loving, and amazing relationship with God.

**“Be of the same mind toward one another. Do not set your mind on high things, but associate with the humble. Do not be wise in your own opinion.”**

(Romans 12:16, NKJV)



## Life Response

God wants our attention. Let's unplug from the world and plug into His presence! Jesus is the priority. He should be the first one on our minds when we wake up in the morning and when we go to sleep at night. Don't allow technology to pull you away from God.



The disconnect that the COVID-19 pandemic caused in our fellowship with one another at church pales compared to the ongoing damage social media can cause in our relationships.

God wants to fellowship with us, and He wants us to fellowship with each other. If technology replaces our relationships, why attend church, pray, and read our Bibles? Jesus wants us to spend less time on our phones and more time praying and spending time with Him.

It was common for me to start my day by opening Instagram before opening my Bible until God asked me, "What's more important, checking your phone or spending time with me?" That was a wake-up call! I repented and started praying before I picked up my phone. I encourage you to set healthy boundaries for when and how much time you will spend on social media.

The sweet little videos of cute kittens can wait; seeing what your friend ate for breakfast can wait. God is waiting for us to spend the first moments of our day with Him.

We may have loved ones living out of town or out of state, and social media is a way to connect with them, but what happened to the old-fashioned method of mailing pictures of the kids to their grandparents or sending a friend a nice card in the mail rather than sending a quick, impersonal text message? Try it once in a while. Your family and friends will be pleasantly surprised.

### Here are some tips that helped me stop social media from controlling my life:

- **First thing in the morning, spend time with God, not your phone.** Don't look at your phone until after you have been with Jesus. If you use an app for Bible reading, open only the app. If you can't resist scrolling online, turn the phone off and read from a print Bible.
- **Realize you're worth is not based on how many followers or likes you get.** Jesus had only twelve close followers, and one betrayed Him. Leverage social media for positive activities. Instead of posting about unimportant things, post testimonies of God's greatness or a favorite Bible verse encouraging those following you. Be a blessing to others.
- **Not everything on social media is true.** The real-life of most people is not as glamorous as they portray. Adding the right lighting, filter, and resources, anyone can make their life look glamorous.
- **If you have teenagers at home, I recommend restricting device time.** Perhaps dinner or scheduled family times are no phone zones. Encourage your children to connect with friends in person, not only online. Friendship isn't about who's posting what; it's about communicating with each other.

- **Try a social media fast.** I logged off of social media for a year. God did so many great things for me during that time. I developed a better relationship with Him. I was able to focus more. I didn't struggle with self-esteem issues. I could connect with God and appreciate what He has given me without posting it on social media. Your social media fast could last a few days, a week, or more. Why not eliminate social media on Saturdays and Sundays so you can spend that time with God and your family? It will enrich your life.

If you feel like you've been addicted to social media and your relationship with God has suffered, then take a break from social media and focus only on spiritual improvements.

If you feel like your relationship with your family and friends has suffered because you've been so wrapped up in statuses and posts, take some time to restore and repair those relationships.

We live in a fast-paced world; let's not allow technology to affect our lives detrimentally.

God has given us so much, and we have come a long way from where He delivered us; let's do everything we can to protect and value our relationship with Him.

If something is moving you away from God or distracting you, get rid of it. Ask God to help you with it. He wants a relationship with you, He wants fellowship, and He wants to be everything to you.

**“And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.’ This is the first commandment.”**

(Mark 12:30, NKJV)

*Submitted by Rebecca Horner*