

Do You Spend Too Much Time on Social Media?

I recently became aware of something about myself. It's been a blind spot for me ... I spend a ridiculous amount of time on social media.

Social media is not a bad thing, but when I am spending more time on Facebook than time in prayer, reading my Bible, being in biblical community, etc., something is wrong. So I had to ask the question: Why do I spend so much time on Facebook and Twitter? What is so attractive to me about social media?

I have a feeling that if you will dig into your heart a bit your response will be similar to mine. I spend so much time on social media sites because it makes me feel important. People with a simple click affirm what I am saying. By becoming my friend or following me you have just said, "I value what Matt Patrick has to say." You may laugh at that but we all get a little ego boost when people like our comments or someone we admire starts to follow us.

This begs another question: Why do I need to feel important? The honest answer is if I need man's approval, then I don't believe the gospel. Hear me: I am a Christian, I love Jesus, and I am assured of my salvation. What I am saying is this: When I feel the need to get my approval from social media, I am forgetting that God has already approved me because of the death of Jesus on the cross.

By Jesus dying the death I deserved, he has paid the price for my sin and has imputed (given) me his righteousness and that is why I can draw near to God the Father. We call this justification. I don't need to seek the approval or love of people on Twitter because God the Father, right here and right now, is looking at me and saying, "Matt you are my son. I have

adopted you and made you an heir to my eternal kingdom, I love you" (Eph.1:5; Gal:4:7).

Social media can tell us subtle lies. Login and say the right things and then you can experience affirmation. Jesus says you do not have to go and seek affirmation, I have paid a great price for it, by my blood you have affirmation that is eternal!

Here are 5 simple practices that I have implemented to help me with this:

1. Don't look at my phone for the 1st hour I am awake.
2. Spend the 1st hour I am awake participating in life giving spiritual disciplines (reading my Bible, prayer, playing with my kid, etc.)
3. Turn off the computer and phone during certain times of the day. Specifically during meals, times of study & prayer, & late in the evening.
4. Don't reply to negative comments social media sites that will not build up the body.
5. Repent. Repent when I feel the temptation to find my worth in things other than Jesus and know that He has forgiven me fully.

**Disclaimer: My list may not be your list, but that's OK. And, if we are not careful, making lists of things to do can become an idol as well.*

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