

Facebook Takes Place of Bible in Most Americans' Lives

What can you say about a nation that reads **Facebook** more than the **Bible**?

Facebook, which celebrated its 10th birthday on Tuesday, reports 757 million daily active users. About 19 percent of them are in the United States and Canada, which translates to about 143 million people logging on to read **Facebook** posts each and every day.

According to a 2006 CBS News poll, 15 percent of U.S. adults read the **Bible** (or some other religious text) every day. The Associated Press did some quick calculations to determine that these numbers mean about 40 million people in the U.S. and Canada read the **Bible** every day. And that was eight years ago. It's more likely that the number of Bible-readers has declined rather than increased, given the downward spiral of our nation.

Now, I'm by no means anti-**Facebook**. I've got about 100,000 people on my Facebook page, and I use the medium as a tool to minister to the masses. So do many other ministries. **Joyce Meyer** has nearly 5 million Facebook followers, and Jesus Daily has a whopping 25 million! Clearly, God is using Facebook.

For all the wonderful ministry happening on **Facebook**, though—including teaching videos and apps—it is no substitute for reading the Bible. After all, Jesus said, “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God” (Matt. 4:4). Somehow, even if **Facebook** were a part of mainstream Galilean culture, I don't think Jesus would give up fellowship with the Father to check Facebook. It's become a near addiction for some people.

But let me go back to my original question: What can you say

about a nation that reads **Facebook** more than the **Bible**? We've got our priorities out of line. Jesus said, "Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you" (Matt. 6:33). But how many seek first the kingdom of **Facebook** on their smartphone each morning rather than seeking God? Selah.

Here's my point: **Facebook** can be a wonderful ministry tool, but for most people in America it's merely a distraction. (I can't tell you how many Christians send me multiple invitations to play Candy Crush or other time-stealing games, for example.) Of course, Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg is not to blame. If it wasn't social media, people would find—and have historically found—something else to entertain them, whether it's television, movies, radio or a seeker-friendly church that tickles their ears with feel-good messages that don't produce change.

The bottom line: America needs to turn back to the God of the Bible, not the god of social media. The **Facebook** statistics, and the AP's spin on them, is just more proof positive that America is rapidly moving in the wrong direction. We need to put God and His Word back in the center of our lives, even if that means missing out on the encouragement that ministries are offering on the platform. So, yes, let's use **Facebook** as an evangelism tool. By all means. Let's use social media to network with those of like-minded faith and equip believers for the work of the ministry. But let's not allow it to become a substitute for personal fellowship with God and His Word. Amen?

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