

# My Facebook Confession

✖ I have a dirty little secret when it comes to Facebook.

It's not something I should share in public; in fact, doing so could get me in trouble. But I've held it within for too long, and it's time I finally let the cat out of the bag.

*I'm over it.*

There, I said it: I am officially over Facebook. In fact, I'm over Twitter and LinkedIn and a host of other social networks as well. It happened unexpectedly to me a few months ago. I'd been an active user for the past three years, sharing everything from my son's birth to the play-by-play when my alma mater won a national championship (War Eagle!). But one day I woke up and, without reason, had no desire to post an update.

The next day the same feeling was there—and the next week, and the week after that. Before the month was up, I realized my account had been stagnant with the exception of others writing, tagging or messaging me. It wasn't that I had nothing to say, nor had Facebook done anything wrong to me. I was simply over it.

I've since found others experiencing a similar “de-Facing” in recent months. Maybe it's a sign of the times: people cultured to always move on to the next big thing amid an online arena that never fails to supply it. Or maybe we're tired of how Facebook can turn any “friend” into a voyeuristic acquaintance. (Aren't relationships so much easier when all they require is a monologue of updates?)

Either way, my feelings don't matter when it comes to Facebook. I may be over it or Twitter or whatever comes next, but none of those online giants will disappear solely by my inactivity—and even when they fade, others will emerge to replace them. “Like” it or not, social networking is here to

stay simply because it's never *not* been present in human history. All that's changed are the vehicles of networking.

The 750 million people on Facebook don't use it because they worship Facebook, but because most have an innate desire to connect with others. Likewise, a *billion* people don't spend an average of 5.2 hours a month on social networks because they can't get enough technology or read enough posts; it's because there are real people involved and real relationships to build.

We can forget that amid the push to market ourselves as a brand and gain a zillion followers. After all, anyone can become an overnight expert these days if you have enough online clout. I don't mean to sound cynical, but too often we reduce people to stats, users or customers and forget the flesh-and-blood, relational element for which these networks were built.

It's easy to lose sight of this in the digital world—and why Facebook soured so quickly for me. I began to think social networking was about me—and therein lies the crux of faith and Facebook.

At the core of our faith is relationship—with God and others—and out of relationship comes community. Something's wrong if I think I can build *authentic* community purely by posting status updates or retweeting the most thought-provoking quotes. Relationships take more work than that. The greatest social networking involves meeting someone's need in a way that never would have happened unless there was a one-on-one, personal connection.

Sounds like what Jesus called us to do as believers, doesn't it? Jesus consistently shunned the masses for the sake of modeling authentic relationship, most often in the context of the true community He shared with His disciples.

There's nothing wrong with addressing the masses online. In

fact, social media may be the greatest tool the church has ever known for fulfilling the Great Commission. But in an environment that makes it easy to neglect true relationship, let's not—as I did—forget why we're connecting with others in the first place.

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