

Playing Candy Crush Saga While America Burns

I know we all need to relax and unwind, and it's true that lots of folks use social media to connect and have fun together. There's obviously nothing wrong with that, as long as it doesn't waste our time or pollute us.

But for those of us who primarily use social media for gospel purposes, it's a little jarring to receive Facebook invitations to play Candy Crush Saga and Happy Aquarium when our hearts are burdened for the church and the world. I often ask myself, "Why in the world are people inviting me to play these games?"

Now, I assume that when someone signs up for one of these games, it automatically contacts everyone in that person's address book (at least, I hope it does this automatically and people are not individually inviting me to play!). And, to repeat, I'm not saying that it's a sin to play such games.

To be totally candid, I have no idea what these games are, and they may provide much-needed down time for some folks. And unless the games are unclean or they steal our time, there's nothing necessarily wrong with playing them. I'm all for having fun with the family and enjoying personal rest, and I agree that sometimes we can use a distraction from the intensity of life and ministry.

As a drummer, I can enjoy watching some great drumming on YouTube, and sometimes I'll even put my laptop down and watch some sports. The last thing I'm saying is that my way of unwinding is better than someone else's. Who am I to judge another man's servant? (See Romans 14:3.)

It's just that I'm often sitting at my computer with my heart aflame, longing to see the world changed for the glory of God,

prayerfully considering what to post to help ignite hearts and deepen burdens and build faith, encouraged to see so many other believers with like passion and desire for the Lord. And then, in the midst of the Facebook “likes” and “shares” and great, insightful comments from so many friends, I’ll get an invitation from someone to play Farmville or Candy Crush Saga or Bubble Epic or Bingo Bash or Diamond Dash or Mahjong Trails or Pengine or Farm Heroes Saga or Papa Pear Saga or Lucky Slots or Zynga Slots or Army Attack or Travel Cell or Happy Aquarium or Pearl’s Peril. (These are the invitations from the last few days, and remember: All of them come to me from an individual who is “inviting” me to play. Thankfully, I have now learned how to stop these from coming again in the future.)

I’ll be praying, “Father, what verse would send out the right message now? What quote would hit home?” and then I’ll post the verse or the quote, believing it will impact lives. And soon enough, I’m being invited to play Pearl’s Peril or Zynga Slots.

Can you relate to how strange this feels? To how emotionally jarring it is?

I think to myself, “How utterly incongruous! Our country is falling apart, the church needs awakening, most of the world is in upheaval, and somebody wants me to play Bingo Bash!”

Last Wednesday, as the fateful Supreme Court decisions were being announced, I felt led to encourage folks via Facebook and Twitter to stop what they were doing and read Psalm 2. (I heard from others who were already in Psalm 2 that same morning.)

Then, during my radio show, I filmed a five-minute response to the rulings to post on our YouTube channel as soon as possible, and when I got home at night after a meeting with our missions organization, despite some real tiredness, I was deeply burdened to write two articles, one a message to

Christian leaders in America, the other on why same-sex “marriage” will ultimately fail. We all have our responsibilities and callings, and I personally felt a deep urgency to write.

And then I began to post quotes on social media, quotes meant to ignite our hearts with passion for a real Jesus revolution in our day, like this: “When a true revival hits the world, it’s a revolution.” Or, “What the world calls fanaticism and much of the church calls extremism, God calls normal.”

On this particular night—meaning, last Wednesday, June 26, when the Supreme Court rulings came down—hundreds of people began to respond to the posts immediately, adding their “amens” and their words of encouragement and their own powerful thoughts. Then, in the midst of it all, a notification comes: “So and so is inviting you to play Bubble Epic.” What?

To say it once more, this could all be totally innocent, and I’m assuming the invitations were not sent directly by the person but rather by the gaming software. I make no personal judgment on anyone.

At the same time, I wonder if this might not be an accurate picture of the church of America in the year 2013: While our country is spinning out of control in a deadly spiral, plunging rapidly into moral and spiritual anarchy, God’s people are wasting hours a day playing silly games.

Will it one day be written that just as Nero fiddled while Rome burned, we piddled our time away while America burned?

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