

Stop Falling for Rage Bait: How Social Media Is Fueling Anger and Destroying Your Influence

Rage Bait. It's the 2025 Oxford word of the year, and it directly correlates to content made for social media that will elicit negative reactions. Not only is this negative content driving our minds and our lives insane, but there is a reason why we are psychologically driven to it.

According to Study Finds, this is like the "result of a negativity bias, where negative emotions such as anger spread more quickly and more intensely through social networks."

To put it another way, they note it is "...more important for us to pay attention to a situation that has caused anger to our group than a situation that has created happiness."

Not only does this make psychological sense, but it is the antithesis of a biblical response to the world around us. In his book, *Time to Rise*, Dr. Malachi O'Brien points out that reacting quickly to what we see online does not necessarily mean we are acting wisely or in accordance with God's Word.

"Social media gives everyone a platform, but it doesn't give everyone wisdom. It hands us a microphone before we've taken time to measure our words," he writes. "It rewards reaction over reflection. Noise over nuance. And the moment we hit 'post,' we set something in motion—something we might not be able to take back.

James 1:19 says it so clearly: 'Be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry.' But let's be honest—social media flips that completely upside down. It pushes us to be

quick to react, slow to listen, and eager to argue.”

O’Brien further argues that we tend to think we were sharing because people “needed” to hear something we had to say. However, as he points out, there are consequences to each and every thing we do online.



To order Malachi O’Brien’s new book, *Time to Rise*, visit .

Every time you post something online, you’re building something—your reputation, your influence, your credibility. Whether you realize it or not, people are watching. And one emotional, reactionary post can undo years of trust in an instant.

The wrong post can fracture relationships. Even if you don’t mean to, you can push away friends, family members, or people who might have been open to listening before.

The wrong post can distort your witness. It doesn’t matter how right you are if your words are laced with sarcasm, hostility, or arrogance. People won’t remember how clever you sounded—they’ll remember how your words made them feel.

The wrong post can trap you in a cycle of negativity. Online battles can be addictive. The more you argue, the more you crave the next fight. It feeds something toxic inside. But what if, before reacting, you simply paused? What if you gave yourself a moment to step back and breathe?

So, what should we do before we post negative content? According to O’Brien, we need to ask ourselves some vital questions before posting.

- Does this reflect who I really want to be?
- Is this drawing people toward truth—or just stirring up more division?

- Will I still be proud of this post a year from now?

While the digital world is designed to provoke outrage, Christians are called to respond differently. We are not meant to be driven by algorithms that reward anger, but by the Spirit who produces love, peace, patience, and self-control. May we be a people who slow down, listen well, speak with grace, and let our online presence reflect the heart of Christ rather than the noise of the moment.

Malachi O'Brien, DMin *is the unofficial Guinness World Record holder for consecutive daily marathons. He is the former VP of the Southern Baptist Convention, former president of OneCry, and founder of NFT Kansas City. In addition to this, he is addicted to Jesus, fasting and prayer. His new book, Time to Rise, is available now at .*