

The Secret Snare of 'Share and God Will Bless You' Memes and Chain Letters

Have you ever received those chain letters or had someone send you a meme promising blessing if you'd just type "Amen" or share with your friends?

Perhaps you've seen those ones with a picture of Jesus manipulating you by saying, "Share if you're not ashamed to have me on your wall."

How about those memes with a pile of money, promising if you share that God will bless you "100-fold" or "Your blessing is coming"?

Beyond the fact that these share/like/send-and-you'll-be-blessed chain letters and graphics are annoying and potentially spread malware in emails, there is one reason above all other that they are so destructive.

The Reason Blessing Chain Letters Are So Destructive

I'll be honest: I get a ton of these every week on Messenger, and I don't answer them or even open them, if I immediately determine that they are chain letters.

A chain letter is a letter or message that convinces the reader to send that letter on to a predetermined number of recipients or as many recipients as possible.

Many times, these chain letters spread false stories with stolen images of sick or injured children, urban legends or promises of blessings if you just pass them on to your friends.

Beyond the threat of viruses and malware, these chain letters

spread a very destructive message.

Nowhere in the Bible are blessings promised to us because we shared a message or meme.

I realize that this probably goes without saying, but the deeper issue here is a total misunderstanding of what faith is and why God blesses us.

Faith isn't just a mental assent that God is all-powerful and the creator of the universe; it is a conviction that no matter what situation we're in, no matter our circumstances, God will take care of us.

Falling into the trap of sending a chain letter or meme, thinking that it will somehow bring us blessing, is actually transferring our faith in God to faith in that chain or meme. It is no different than a good-luck charm.

Most times these chain letters or memes promise health and wealth. The problem is that the Bible never promised either of these.

Ephesians says that God has blessed us with "every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ" (Eph. 1:3b).

Heavenly blessings don't necessarily mean that we'll be rich and have perfect health while here on earth. In fact, many Christians rich in heavenly blessings had just enough for their daily needs. Some of them were sick for a very long time before they went home to be with Christ.

Furthermore, Jesus warned us in Matthew 5 against laying up treasures here on earth, because they are destructible and perishable.

We can lose our money in a market downturn, we can invest it unwisely or we can be robbed.

But heavenly treasures are eternal.

How God Blesses People

1. God blesses all people.

In Matthew 5 Jesus instructed us to love and bless our enemies and those who persecute us, as sons of our Father who does the same. He sends sun and rain to those who live justly and unjustly.

In several places throughout Scripture, we see that blessings are not contingent upon our behavior, but that God blesses those He chooses to bless.

2. The righteous and just are rewarded.

If God simply blessed people randomly, regardless of whether or not they lived their lives in obedience to His Word, we'd find it demotivating to live in obedience.

While we don't obey God so that we will be blessed, God chooses to reward our obedience to Him.

We obey God's Word out of love and honor for Him, and His Word clearly says that He honors those who honor Him.

But because of your hardness and impenitent heart, you are storing up treasures of wrath against yourself on the day of wrath when the righteous judgment of God will be revealed, and He "will render to every man according to his deeds." To those who by patiently doing good seek for glory and honor and immortality will be eternal life. But to those who are contentious and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation, and wrath, will be tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man who does evil, to the Jew first, and then to the Gentile. But glory, honor, and peace will be to every man who does good work—to the Jew first, and then to the Gentile (Rom. 2:5-10).

How Should We Respond to Chain Letters and Memes?

1. Kindly ask your friends to stop sending them.

Your friends may not be aware of the destructive nature of these messages and memes. Kindly inform them of their destructive nature and the possible threat of viruses and malware, and then ask them to stop sending them.

2. Don't open them.

While this may not prevent memes from popping up on your timeline (apart from unfriending or unfollowing your friends on Facebook), you can avoid opening the emails and messages on Messenger.

Many times, this is enough to reinforce the message that you do not want to receive these messages any longer. {eoa}

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