

What Can Facebook Emoticons Add to Our Identity in Christ?

Facebook is a wonderful social media tool in which to share the gospel of Jesus Christ. However, now that they have added emoticons, will your reaction be one of love, confusion, hurt or rejection?

People use social media on their computer and phones to keep up with the latest news, post their daily happenings and for spiritual insights. One of the fun but challenging things about Facebook has been that wonderful—or not so wonderful, depending on how you look at it—"like" button.

We haven't always known our identity in Christ; therefore we look to people unfortunately for our identity, acceptance and approval. The like button has been a measuring gauge for some of us on how well we are doing by getting society's approval.

Unfortunately, the like button can also bring in rejection. You think you have this awesome post or did a really cool thing and that lots of people are going to hit that like button. As you go to check your notifications to see how that post rated, you discover it didn't do too well. In those times, disappointment, insecurity, rejection, jealousy and other unhealthy emotions can set in.

Now that Facebook has added buttons that include like, love, sad, angry, wow and haha, what is that going to do with the already ongoing saga of how people are reacting to our posts? Are we going to define our worth in a rating on Facebook or our identity in Christ?

What will you do and how will you react to the Facebook emoticons? Facebook enhanced our pages, but don't allow this

to be used as an opportunity to vent your feelings, let in rejection or ponder what another person is feeling about your post. Your identity is in Christ, not in how your reaction to an emoticon makes you feel.

We don't always know the interpretation of something posted on Facebook and how the person on the other end is feeling, or if they understood what we said. Just as emails and text messages can be misunderstood, so can Facebook. When that emoticon is hit, and you don't really like the response, remember you don't know the interpretation, what the person has already been through that day, or the sarcasm or crass emotion they may be experiencing at that moment.

There are several reasons people like and don't like a post, and the idea is to have fun with Facebook, socially share and share the gospel when we can. But most of all, don't get offended. If what you're reading is upsetting or the emoticons aren't in your favor, then maybe it's a good time to go to prayer or read your Bible.

As we move forward in Facebook, we want to represent ourselves as kingdom citizens and be cautious and aware of the emoticon we are hitting. There's a saying: If you can't say something nice, don't say anything at all. Perhaps that's what we need to do with an emoticon. If we can't hit like or love, then maybe we need to abstain from hitting sad or angry.

God is love and, as kingdom citizens, we should represent His love. Show Christ's love on Facebook. Have fun with the emoticons, but don't let them weigh you down, impact your emotions or open a door to unhealthy feelings.

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