

7 Ways To Be 'More Like Jesus' Online

I have been amazed at what people who love Jesus can write about other people who love Jesus online. I am referring to comments that believers leave on blogs and Facebook postings. Not long ago, I responded kindly to someone who attacked something I wrote. I think his first word regarding my blog was “*NONSENSE!*”

When he saw my response, he quickly wrote back an apology saying, “I didn’t realize you would read my comment.” Of course, a blogger with respect for his readers doesn’t just write and disappear but reads responses and responds back. That is the difference between a blog and a magazine article.

We live in new world where people can respond instantly to blogs or Facebook postings—often without realizing that “reckless words pierce like a sword.” We of all people should have our words seasoned with love, even when we disagree.

I have hesitated to write this blog, because I didn’t want people to think that I am thin-skinned—that I was seeking to defend. However, when I saw what someone posted about a dear friend of mine last night, I decided it was time. Here’s the post.

“What a petty article, people to the left and right of us are dying to the left and right of us. Or living but dying inside without the Savior. You sir have a religious spirit. Christian=anointed ones in the Hebrew has the same root and meaning as messiah. Get over your self pride and go win a soul for the King.”

Amazingly, two people liked this post! Let’s forget for the moment that this hastily written message is barely coherent. The man he was rebuking is one of the most humble men I know.

He has risked his life for the Gospel when his congregation in northern Israel was firebombed. He has led countless people to Yeshua, both through public preaching and grinding it out on the streets. He has birthed five congregations in Israel (more than any other leader). Yet this fellow speaks to him in the most ungodly judgmental way.

My guess is that this young man (I assume he is young) would not have spoken to my friend like that had they been in the same room. But our fingers tend to lack the tact of our tongue, and we tend to be just a little bit meaner when sending emails, commenting on blogs, mocking people on Twitter or responding to a controversial post on Facebook.

Here are several tips that can help us communicate with kindness and disagree respectfully without denigrating a person or calling them names.

1. Assume the Author Is Human and Will See Your Comment. Most serious bloggers want to engage with their readers and therefore do read the comments. Don't assume he or she is in some ivory tower somewhere, but that he or she is just like you. We sometimes respond as if the author is not real. I have sent messages on Twitter to blogger Michael Hyatt and each time he has responded, despite having 125,000 followers. I view Mr. Hyatt as a 'real' person, not merely someone famous.

2. Look Across the Room. Pretend that you are talking to the person and they are sitting next to you. Don't be any bolder behind the protection of your laptop or iSomething than you would be face-to-face.

3. Double Check your Attitude. Before you click "post" to a comment in which you disagree with someone, check twice to make sure you are attacking the argument and not the person. It is one thing to say, "I disagree with you and here is why..." It is another thing to say, "I disagree with you and you are a stupid, proud, arrogant idiot... and you smell bad!"

4. Disagree with Respect. Even when you do disagree, do so with respect. Personally, I love to engage people who disagree with me. I do have about three full-time jobs, so I have to be careful not to spend my whole day debating theology on the Internet. But when someone challenges, I am game—but only if the person communicates with respect.

5. Do Unto Others...Use the Golden Rule of the Internet: *Respond unto someone in the way in which you would like them to respond to you.* Pretend you are the one on the receiving end of your response. How would you feel? Would you feel *attacked* or *respected*?

6. Don't Be Impulsive. Never respond impulsively, but rationally. If you are out having dinner with your family and you feel the need to run to the bathroom so you can continue debating with someone a million miles away through your phone, you might have a problem. Sometimes in the midst of these debates we become impulsive—and obnoxious—ignoring the more important things in life, like your family or your job. And because of the pressure of being in a bathroom, typing on a phone, while your wife thinks you are relieving yourself, would tend to send a badly worded message that might reveal your obsessive state. Stay focused on your real life.

7. Don't Make it Personal. Never respond emotionally. If someone is rude to you, don't be rude back. When someone disagrees with me—even rudely—I will often start my response with the words, “Thanks for responding” and end my post with the words, “Blessings.”

Full disclosure: I have probably broken every one of these rules, but like you, I am a work in progress. Let's commit ourselves, especially those of us who claim to love Jesus, to act just a little bit more like Him in our Internet discourses.

Question: What are some other ways that you think might help

us communicate better? Use the comments section below.

Click here for the original article at .

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