

Internet & Eternal Interests



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As the internet exposes us to new forms of communication, and connection with a huge amount of information, ideas, opinions, images, leisure activities, and online entertainment, temptations increase exponentially, as well. Scriptural advice and serious warnings on the use of modern technology are definitely needed. Fortunately for the 21st century Christian, a Book that was written many centuries ago gives up-to-the-minute information on how to use these modern forms of communication.

Everyone wants to be in-the-loop—which is obvious from the enormous, increasing amount of text messaging, emails, IMs, Podcasts, RSS Feeds, Widgets, Facebook, Twitter, MySpace—and a multitude of wireless communication devices of every type that would keep someone in touch at all times, with anyone, and from any location.

Stated simply—it is not a sin to *use* technology, but it is very possible and very likely that Satan will tempt people to *misuse* it. Any device that *causes* us to sin is being misused. Today, everyone must be on constant guard to Satan's subtle, but wicked ways to lure people onto areas that would defile their conscience and could destroy their soul forever. *That is why Jesus warned Matthew 24:4 "Watch out [take heed] that no one deceives you."*

More than ever, we must know how to live a holy life, in a very unholy world. Every choice and decision must be in agreement with

God's will and Word. There are so many things that can deceive us and lead us to commit serious sins; we have to be alert to, and aware of, who is *behind* the material or device.

An old *book* that deals with new *sins*, is an indispensable tool in our struggle against sin, self, and Satan. Hebrews 12:1 *"Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders [ensnares; entangles; besets—attack, assail, besiege, overwhelms] and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance [patient endurance] the race marked out for us."*

Millions today have allowed themselves to become entangled and ensnared by Web pages that have *caused* them to sin. Following the advice from God's Word is the only way to live a holy life in an increasingly unholy environment.

Seven times Jesus said that if our eye, our hand, or our foot *causes* us to sin, we are to take drastic action and remove the cause Matthew 5, 18; Mark 9. Jesus said to cut off, tear out, or throw away *that* which is the *cause* of the sin. Today it would be to cancel the magazine subscription, stop the online service, unsubscribe to the email list, etc. The family's spiritual and eternal interests are too important not to take action when action is necessary.

Young people want to communicate with friends, or anyone, and can do so with a Web log—termed a *blog*. MySpace and Facebook enable people to write about themselves and share it with the world. The problem is, however, that we live in a fallen world controlled by the devil, so large numbers of predators can use the information from blogs for very wicked and evil purposes. *Watch out that no one deceives you*—there is a dark side to online connections.

A Web page can proclaim the full Truth of God's Word worldwide. Modern technology can be a valuable tool to share the full-truth gos-

pel messages God has inspired to be given in our church services. Written *words* can be a spiritual *light* for someone who may never have heard of trusting God in faith for physical healing; of placing injustices before God in prayer; of trusting God for daily finances without borrowing money; or about salvation by a believing and trusting faith in the atonement work of Christ. Jesus said Matthew 24:14 *"This gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come."*

Before modern technology, a person had to search for magazines, films, and photos that feed the flesh, but now an enormous amount of immoral images and material are just a click away. Because online information is much easier to access, and because photos or images are available in the privacy of one's room, millions have become entangled and ensnared in a web of immoral and wicked Web sites. One click can quickly lead to a habit that is difficult to break.

It is *not* a sin to use technology, but it *is* a sin to *misuse* it. The two natures within need food—and the one we feed and nourish, is the one that grows and controls. The nature we nourish by *day* will quickly control by *night*. Any unscriptural viewing will lead to lustful thoughts and ungodly desires. Statistics say that profits from the porn industry exceed those of the three major sports' franchises combined. We have to guard our mind and control the use of modern devices.

Many think that their online surfing goes undetected, but Hebrews 4:13 *"Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account."* It is a humbling thought to know that we will stand before the One who took our place on the cross—so we could be free from sin. The Holy Spirit is to re-

side in our heart—we 1 Corinthians 6:19—“*have been redeemed at infinite cost. Therefore glorify God in your bodies.*”

The modern-day believer faces unprecedented challenges. The Internet itself offers many *new ways* to feed the *old sin* nature. Online services bring new twists to the age-old issue of how to live a holy life in a very ungodly world. Immoral material was once difficult to find, but now can invade our home at the click of a mouse. By the power of God’s Spirit, we must use technology scripturally—while surrounded by temptations and enticements unheard of years ago.

God will not be mocked Galatians 6:7 “*The soul who sins is the one who will die*” Ezekiel 18:20-21; “*But if a wicked man turns away from all the sins he has committed and keeps all my decrees and does what is just and right, he will surely live; he will not die.*”

The solution is simple, but a choice must be made. If we will confess, God will forgive. 1 John 1:9. If we will stop using technology to feed the flesh, repent and forsake those wrong ways, God will not charge those sins against us. It is not a sin to use modern technology, but it is a serious sin to *misuse* it—by feeding the sin-nature.

Those responsible in the home must be aware of the danger facing children today, and to set guidelines if anyone is online. The computer must be visible, so that those responsible for its use are in sight of what is being viewed. Children need to be advised on proper use of online service providers. Psalm 101:3 “*I will set before my eyes no vile [wicked] thing.*” “*I will refuse to look at anything vile and vulgar.*”

We must “*Put on the full armor of God*” Ephesians 6:11, otherwise it is no contest against the enemy of our soul who tries to enter our home. The struggle against sin is a serious battle, because it is Ephesians 6:12 “*against powers, against*

the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.”

Web browsers retain Internet history to indicate what sites were visited. Households must be alert to the ungodly material available today. Young family members must have limits placed on what can be accessed and what web pages can be viewed. 1 Peter 5:8 “*Be self-controlled [sober, vigilant] [curb every passion] and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around*” like a tiger stalking its victim—stealthily, but deliberately, “*looking for someone to devour.*”

Commandment #7 says, “*You shall not commit adultery*” Exodus 20:14, but Jesus says we cannot even *think* of immoral acts. Matthew 5:28 “*I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart.*” The One who forgives our sins, can also change our hearts. Ezekiel 18:27 “*If a wicked man turns away from the wickedness he has committed and does what is just and right, he will save his life.*”

Children must be trained, and scriptural ways explained, in how to use modern technology, but those who are of age and accountable for their actions, must know that it is a matter of the heart Luke 17:21 “*because the kingdom of God is within you.*” We will give an account to the Judge of everyone. Millions today think they are fooling God! Galatians 6:7 “*Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows.*” Much evil is perpetrated behind closed doors, but “*nothing in all creation is hidden from God’s sight*” Hebrews 4:13.

The believer must deal with many issues today, and the Internet is just one of them. The apostle referred to God’s people as an example. 1 Corinthians 10:1-5 “*I do not want you to be ignorant of the fact, brothers, that our forefathers were all under the cloud and that they all passed through the sea. They were all baptized into*

Moses in the cloud and in the sea. They all ate the same spiritual food and drank the same spiritual drink; for they drank from the spiritual rock that accompanied them, and that rock was Christ. Nevertheless, God was not pleased with most of them; their bodies were scattered over the desert.”

The apostle then said 8 “*We should not commit sexual immorality, as some of them did—and in one day twenty-three thousand of them died.*” That is a most serious warning to the Internet user today who is accessing questionable online web sites. 6 “*Now these things occurred as examples to keep us from setting our hearts on evil things as they did.*”

The believer’s only goal is to stand before God on the day of reckoning, and be accepted into His kingdom. And since it is a matter of the heart—when we make decisions on how to use modern technology—the words of Jesus take on a whole new meaning.

Mark 7:21-23 “*From within, out of a person’s heart, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, greed, wickedness, deceit, eagerness for lustful pleasure, envy, slander, pride, and foolishness. All these vile things come from within; they are what defile you and make you unacceptable to God.*” It is not a sin to *use* technology—but it definitely is a sin to *misuse* it.



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