

Will you   
  be my
facebook 
friend? 

SOCIAL MEDIA AND THE GOSPEL

Tim Chester

Will you be my Facebook friend?

This revised edition Copyright © 2018 by Tim Chester.

Published in Great Britain in 2018.

First published in Great Britain in 2013 and reprinted four times, 2013 (twice), 2014 and 2015.

Published in 2013 by 10Publishing, a division of 10ofthose.com
Unit C, Tomlinson Road, Leyland, PR25 2DY, England.

Email: info@10ofthose.com

Website: www.10ofthose.com

ISBN 9781906173852

All rights reserved. Except as may be permitted by the Copyright Act, no part of this publication may be reproduced in any form or by any means without prior permission from the publisher.

Scripture taken from the HOLY BIBLE, NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION®. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984 Biblica. Used by permission of Zondervan. All rights reserved.

The “NIV” and “New International Version” trademarks are registered in the United States Patent and Trademark Office by Biblica. Use of either trademark requires the permission of Biblica.

Also where referenced The Holy Bible, English Standard Version, copyright ©2008 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Design by Diane Warnes

Printed in Denmark by Nørhaven

Get off-line, turn off Spotify and read this book! You'll get through it in less time than many of us spend on Facebook each day, but this book will do you lasting good. Tim Chester writes honestly and urgently about both the potential and pitfalls of social media, calling us back to the 3D relationships we were created for. Like.

Dave Gobbett, Lead Minister, Highfields Church, Cardiff.

It's striking, given the amount of time that many of us spend communicating with others online, how few of us have stopped to reflect on why we do so? This great little book will help you do just that, exposing wrong motives and showing us how faith in Christ challenges and changes the way we engage with others online.

Tim Dennis, Senior Assistant Minister, St Mary's Church, Basingstoke.

Tim Chester is always insightful, and this little book is no exception. Wise, gracious, challenging and thoughtful, it will benefit anyone who uses social media. First class.

Andrew Wilson, Teaching Pastor, King's Church, London.

Contents



Do you check Facebook lots of times every day and wait expectantly for the little red notification signs? If so, this book is for you. It encourages us to think about how we can use Facebook (and other social media) in a way that keeps God at the centre of our lives, and glorify him not ourselves. A challenging and helpful read.

Sarah Bradley, Youth Minister and Keswick Youth Leader.

This book is concise, insightful, challenging and compelling. If social media is something that you, or those around you, are engaged with, you'd do well to un-plug for a while and plug-in to what Tim has to say on the matter. Uncomfortable truths are presented alongside wise, gracious advice. Above all we are repeatedly pointed to Jesus and encouraged to live real lives, rooted in genuine community and marked by the gospel. Like.

Dai Hankey, Church Planter and Author.

+1 What's the Problem?	p9
+2 Recreating My World	p25
+3 Escaping My Limitations	p37
+4 The Face Book of God	p51
+ Twelve Guidelines for Social Networking	p59

+1 What's the Problem?



When Facebook launched on the NASDAQ stock exchange in May 2012, it was valued at over 100 billion dollars. Not bad for a company that had only been in existence for eight years. In June 2017 it had over 2 billion active users – about a third of the entire planet. It is clearly offering its users something significant.

Facebook is itself part of the wider phenomenon of social networking – the use of the Internet not just to find information, but also to connect with people. Social networking has rapidly become a central feature of the lives of many people today. Ninety-seven per cent of people aged between 16 and 65 with Internet access have used a social network over the past month. That's virtually all of us.

Every minute of every day there are:¹

- 3.6 million searches on Google
- 46,760 photos added to Instagram
- over 15 million texts sent
- 456,000 new tweets
- over half a million photos shared via Snapchat
- over 4 million videos watched on YouTube
- 13 new songs added to Spotify
- 45,787 Uber journeys
- £191,625 spent on Amazon
- over 100 million spam emails
- 600 page edits on Wikipedia

Every minute.

And I know this because I found the information online.

Benefits



There is much that is good about this. New technologies reflect humanity's God-given, Godlike creativity. God gave us a mandate to take his world and invent, create, produce.

Social networking brings many benefits.

One of my colleagues is from Australia. Looking over his shoulder in the office last week, I saw a video of his 2-year-old son. His wife had taken it moments before on her iPhone and then emailed it to the grandparents, copying in my colleague. New technologies are enabling people to keep in touch over long distances.

In the early days of email, our church was involved in sending missionaries to Azerbaijan. I remember a prayer meeting in which we prayed for the wife because she was struggling with a headache. We were all awed by the fact that we were praying for their prayer needs in much the same way as we were praying for the needs of one another. Instead of having to wait weeks at a time for letters that summarized months of news, we were able to pray for them in real time. Now texts, emails, blogs, Twitter and Skype enable missionaries to keep in constant touch with sending churches. These things may not replace face-to-face contact, but they are a big improvement on occasional letters.