

STEWARDS OF THE INTERNET

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The Internet

The internet is a gift from God to be handled responsibly. Christian stewards should manage it properly along with all the other good gifts God has granted. Computers certainly are most advantageous, providing quick communication, breaking news, current events and information on almost every subject. It is also an efficient tool for social networking. Many use it to chat, blog, post on face book and twitter. The internet, however, can be a bane or blessing. Like money, it can be used properly or misused.



Faulty Information

Not everything on the internet is true. At times information may be one-sided, perverted to one's personal bias. Radicals are quick to convey points of view designed to disrupt stability. Religious articles often violate the truth of the Scriptures conveying a theological nightmare of human opinions by radical religionists. President Reagan once said, after signing the INF Treaty with the Soviet Union: "Trust but verify." When I was a boy, my dad told me somewhat the same thing: "Sonny, don't believe everything you hear and read." Good advice for the internet.

A Source of Temptation

Pornography is readily available on the internet to lure into the realm of lust. It can become addictive to the point of replacing proper sexual expression. It can stimulate sexual perversion, violence and child abuse. Christian stewards have a three pronged weapon for fighting and overcoming temptations:

- > *Remember God's Word* - Ex. 20:14; Mt. 5:28; Gal. 5:16-21; Titus 2:11-12; James 1:13-15.
- > *Pray to Overcome Temptation* - The Holy Spirit is eager to offer spiritual strength.
- > *Immediately Get Busy* - Get your mind fully engaged in an engrossing beneficial activity and away from whatever the temptation.

The spiritual power to engage the above process rests in love for Christ and His forgiving love.

A Thief of Time

Computers can eat up time voraciously. In the workplace, management often has to monitor the

use of computers to prevent workers from wasting time on personal nonessentials. A lifestyle of excessive computer use can replace physical exercise so necessary for health. Too much internet can steal time from other beneficial pursuits and worthwhile accomplishments.

A Social Disrupter

While sitting in a hot tub after a swim at the "Y", I observed a teenager in the tub glued to an I-pad. I interrupted her obsession: "I hope you haven't become a prisoner of that thing you're playing with." She replied, "No. But you sound just like my dad." I responded, "Well, it can certainly interrupt social interaction. I once observed a girl totally into her I-pad while her date sat like a bump on a log staring into space. I wondered how long it would have taken her to notice he had gone, if he got up and left." The teenager's eyes lit up. "That's exactly what a date did to me once! I'll never go out with that jerk again."

A Family Disrupter

In March, 2014, the Boston Medical Center carefully observed care-givers and children at fast-food restaurants. Out of 55 care-givers, 40 used their mobile devices to the point of total absorption and the exclusion of their children. One woman actually pushed a small boy away as he took her face in his hands to get her attention. Dr. June Scott, a Colorado pediatrician, observed that inattention of kids due to parental internet obsession, can sometimes produce temper tantrums, anxiety and resistance to discipline. Excessive internet use can prevent family communication, hindering healthy relationships between spouses, parents and children.

Moderation

Moderation is the keyword for managing the internet. Plautus, a Latin writer, once said: "In everything the middle course is best; all things in excess bring troubles to mankind." A sensible, non-excessive, moral use of God's gift of cyberspace and the micro chip will embellish our lives as we live them in love for Christ. 1 Cor. 7:31 offers good advice: "Use the things of this world as if not engrossed in them."