

Words of Truth

Are We Becoming Wireless Or Disconnected?

By: Brian A. Yeager

One day Katrina and I were grocery shopping and I asked a woman to excuse us as we were in her way. She did not acknowledge that I had even spoken to her. Upon a second look at the woman, I noted she had “earbuds” [a small earphone that fits inside a person’s ear, used to listen to a portable music player] in her ears. This woman did not hear one word I had said to her. This was frustrating for me. Later through the store I began noticing how many people were text messaging, talking on cell phones, or listening to portable music players. Since that day, I have observed these things occurring all too often.

Staying in touch among people today has become a “Facebook” or “MySpace” task. People are tweeting on “Twitter” to know what’s going on in the lives of people that are friends and even family members. Instead of a conversation to find out how someone is doing, society has begun looking for a few incomplete sentences here and there to know about people’s lives. Folks, our society has become a society of little personal contact. Looking in on someone has turned into checking out someone’s page on the Internet. So, what does this have to do with Scriptural matters?

Unfortunately, the world often influences Christians more than Christians influence the world. Of course, this is not supposed to be the way it works (Matthew 5:14-16 and Philippians 2:14-16). Christians are not supposed to be conformers to the ways of this world (Romans 12:1-2). Yet, modern technology is certainly appealing. Before we get to the point of this article, I want to be sure and state what we are not going to be talking about.

This Article Is Not Intending To...

It is not my intention to cause anyone to believe it is sinful to use modern technology. If we can use modern technology to communicate, in an expedient and lawful manner, such is certainly authorized (Isaiah 8:1 and II Timothy 4:13). Some would take an article like this and try to use it to promote an almost Amish style of living. Listen, if it were not for advances in technology mankind would be walking everywhere we go. While airplanes were not a means of transportation in the days of our Lord, He did use expedient means of transportation such as boats to travel (Matthew 8:23). We never want to go too far with any matter of expedience. We certainly would not want to run to the point of having an overbearing conscience regarding this or any other matter of expediency (Romans 14:7-13).

In this article it is not my intention to communicate that it is sinful to use technology in social affairs. Again, this would not be something anyone should legislate for another. Along this line however, we must understand that because something is lawful that does not make it expedient (I Corinthians 10:23). Even in matters of expediency we should always use the Scriptures to make the wisest decisions (II Peter 1:3). It is from that point we are going to draw some thoughts from the Scriptures.

Biblically, There Is Much To Be Said About Face-To-Face Communication

Can you see facial expressions in text messages? Can you read body language on someone's Facebook page? What can you tell about the physical health of a loved one through an email? Does a personal letter give the comfort of a hug for a grieving family member? Of course, everyone realizes the benefits of a face-to-face conversation when we think about it (I Corinthians 16:17-18, Philippians 2:24-30, and II Timothy 1:16-17).

Our Lord certainly knew the need for face-to-face communication. Our Lord condemns Christians who refuse to physically see their brethren who are sick or imprisoned (Matthew 25:31-46). James wrote about caring for the widows and fatherless. James did not say we should send them money or write them letters. James, through inspiration, requires visitation [looking in on] those widows and fatherless children (James 1:26-27). The Apostles certainly understood the benefit of personal communication. When the Apostles, elders, and church in Jerusalem sent a letter to the saints in Antioch they sent Barnabas, Paul, Judas, and Silas along as well to speak with the brethren there (Acts 15:22-27).

When the brethren in Ephesus learned they'd not see Paul again, they mourned (Acts 20:25; 36-38). The saints in Ephesus were not saddened because they would never hear from Paul again, for they would later receive at least one Epistle from him. They were not saddened because they would not have Paul's influence in Ephesus any more either. Paul made sure to send teachers to Ephesus to keep the work moving (I Timothy 1:3-4). The brethren in Ephesus loved their brother Paul and were sad that they would see his face no more. Brethren, there is great value in face-to-face communication! In fact, there are some plain Scriptures that spell this out for us.

Notice What The Scriptures Plainly Say

There are some Scriptures that motivated this article. I want to make sure we get to those before we conclude this study. Here are those Scriptures: *"Whensoever I take my journey into Spain, I will come to you: for I trust to see you in my journey, and to be brought on my way thitherward by you, if first I be somewhat filled with your company... That I may come unto you with joy by the will of God, and may with you be refreshed... But we, brethren, being taken from you for a short time in presence, not in heart, endeavoured the more abundantly to see your face with great desire. Wherefore we would have come unto you, even I Paul, once and again; but Satan hindered us... Night and day praying exceedingly that we might see your face, and might perfect that which is lacking in your faith... Having many things to write unto you, I would not write with paper and ink: but I trust to come unto you, and speak face to face, that our joy may be full... I had many things to write, but I will not with ink and pen write unto thee: But I trust I shall shortly see thee, and we shall speak face to face. Peace be to thee. Our friends salute thee. Greet the friends by name"* (Romans 15:24, Romans 15:32, I Thessalonians 2:17-18, I Thessalonians 3:10, II John 12, and III John 13-14).

Conclusion

Let's be careful, my brethren, when it comes to our modern ways of communication. Let us never lose the importance of personal contact with those whom we love in the Lord! We need to continue opening our homes for each other (Romans 12:13 and I Peter 4:9) rather than just sending a quick text to check in on each other. Be wireless if you so find it useful, just don't become disconnected!