



CONNECTED

DISCIPLESHIP GROUP
MATERIAL ON
NAVIGATING FAITH IN
A **SOCIAL MEDIA WORLD**

Connected:

Discipleship Group Material
on Navigating Faith in a Social
Media World



EVERY NATION
PRODUCTIONS

**CONNECTED: DISCIPLESHIP GROUP MATERIAL
ON NAVIGATING FAITH IN A SOCIAL MEDIA WORLD**

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INTRODUCTION

As followers of Christ and as a body of believers, Peter calls us “exiles” and “transients” of this world (1 Peter 2:9–11). This world now includes our digital reality. We will have to rediscover and rethink how we live out our faith in the social media world. What does it mean to be in the world but not of the world and to have received a new identity and citizenship in Christ? How should these be integrated as we navigate the digital world?

The book of Colossians can help us in this. It’s a letter by Paul to the troubled believers in a place called Colossae. The believers were said to be in danger of doubting God’s sovereignty, salvation, and sufficiency, causing them to reduce the gospel to mere religious maxims—having separated their belief in Christ from their behavior for Christ. And so to strengthen and keep the believers from the ideas and influences of their generation, he exhorted the believers on the good news of Christ’s preeminence: His Lordship over all of creation—both the physical and the spiritual, the seen and the unseen—and that in Him, we are complete. Indeed, for us to be the light in this digital world, we are to rediscover who Christ is, what He has done for us, and how He expects us to live.

Social media is the extension of our real lives. Through these materials and as we live out our faith every day, may we honor God and inspire others to follow Jesus as well.

Connected is a four-lesson material that seeks to help individuals navigate the digital world. Through this, we will learn what God’s word says about who we are and how we can use our social media platforms to accomplish His purpose for our lives as individuals and as a spiritual community.

For the Victory Group Leader

The digital space has great potential to reach a lot of people, but it also has a lot of potential pitfalls. As Victory group leaders, we need to be mindful of how we interact on social media and

encourage our members to do the same. Here are some things to keep in mind as we engage in the digital space:

- **We are to fill our hearts with God's word.** With all the fake news and misinformation we are receiving online, our hearts have to be anchored on the truth. Instead of going straight to our social media platforms, we can start each day by consuming the word of God first, trusting that His truth will guard our hearts and minds from the onslaught of lies and misinformation.
- **We are representing Christ online.** We don't necessarily have to post Bible verses to do this. It means that our response to posts we strongly disagree with or negative comments we receive online should all be brought under the Lordship of Christ. Before posting, for example, reflection, prayer, and discussion can all help.
- **We are to keep God's kingdom at the forefront.** Our personal causes and passion should not derail us from advancing His kingdom here on earth. Therefore, what we do online should reflect His kingdom, which is characterized by love, peace, and unity.
- **We have the Holy Spirit who can give us wisdom and discernment at all times.** Before we post or respond to someone else's post, we can pray and ask the Holy Spirit to guide our words and actions or reveal something in our hearts that He may want to change.
- **We are to build stronger relationships offline.** Social media is just one of the ways to connect with people. We can bring discussions offline and strengthen ties even with people whose opinions are different from ours.

As Christians, we are to align ourselves with what God is doing in our midst. Since the digital space is a tool that God is using for His redemptive purpose, our behavior online should contribute in uniting His Church and making Him known to the world.

1 Create Your Profile

WARM-UP

- Why do you usually go on social media? How has social media helped you?
- Tell us about an identification card you recently renewed, discarded, or registered for.
- Share your profile description on one of your social media accounts.

WORD *¹⁵He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. ¹⁶For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. **COLOSSIANS 1:15-16***

*⁶Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, ⁷rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving. ⁸See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to Christ. ⁹For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily . . . **COLOSSIANS 2:6-10***

Social media has become a major part of our lives. Technology and innovation have brought us a kind of instant connection to almost anyone in our world today. When we sign up for a social media account, we are asked to add information about ourselves that will determine our profile. It is how we view ourselves and how others will view us. Who are we, and what do we believe? What matters to us? Are we consistent in who we are, online and offline? In this lesson, we are going to revisit who God says we are according to Christ's finished work on the cross.

1 | We have been rescued by Christ.

*¹³He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, ¹⁴in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. **COLOSSIANS 1:13-14***

As believers who have received the gospel of Christ, we are to be reminded of who Christ truly is and what He has done for us, which we could never do for ourselves. We were once far from Christ, *dead* in our sins, and in the realm of darkness (Colossians 1:21-22; 2:13-14). But He rescued us, redeemed us, and has forgiven us. He has made us alive and brought us under His loving rule in His kingdom. Our status has changed and our values are therefore to be shaped by His kingdom ways and priorities. How do you personally use social media purposefully without being sucked by other values and priorities?

2 | We have submitted our lives to Christ's Lordship.

*¹⁷And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together. ¹⁸And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent. **COLOSSIANS 1:17-18***

Thanks to Google and developments like Google Earth, this tech-savvy, highly digital culture can make us easily feel all-knowing or omniscient, and even omnipresent. We are always just a few clicks away from knowing whatever we need to know or seeing different places. Yet, this could not be farther from the truth. We are neither omniscient nor omnipresent. Only God is.

The real-time news, updates, and reactions have also created a gap between citizens and those in authority. Leaders are more easily doubted, second-guessed, and cross-checked. This way of relating to authority is counter to what Scripture says. But while fallen humanity does initiate and experience the abuse of power, God is not like that. God is loving and holy. He is the ultimate authority who holds *all things* together. The Bible calls us to surrender and submit to Jesus as Lord of our all, even in how we use our digital platforms. Our relationship with Christ must be that of a faithful and resilient disciple, guided and led by Him and His word and not by any other God-substitute, including ourselves. Amidst the noise and influence of the digital age, what habits or disciplines keep you strengthened in your faith and resilient as a follower of Jesus?

3 | We are to live rooted in Christ.

⁶Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, ⁷rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving. **COLOSSIANS 2:6-7**

The only fitting response to who Christ is and what He has done for us is to surrender to Him and receive Him as our Lord. And because of the good news of His person and work, we are now empowered to keep walking with Him and building our lives around Him, for His honor and glory. We are to be more intentional in strengthening our faith in Him and have a lifestyle of gratitude and contentment in Him. We are not to be easily swayed into discontentment and insecurity because of what we experience online, which

has a tendency to highlight something we don't have or make us think of something that will seemingly make our lives better and more complete. In Christ, we are complete. In Him alone, we can stand secure in life. Share a moment when you felt like you just had to have something online (e.g., an advertisement, an influencer's post, or a friend's story). Looking back, what do you think God was showing you about it?

APPLICATION

- What is God showing you lately about the way you use social media?
- Is there any area of your social media consumption or creation that is not submitted to Jesus' Lordship?
- How do you think you can be rooted in Christ and be more like Him? How can your online activity reflect Christ even when you do not post religious content?

PRAYER

- Praise God for the innovation of technology and the benefits of social media.
- Ask God for wisdom and discipline to grow in greater conviction to use digital platforms purposefully and to honor Him.
- Ask God for His heart for people, and for compassion to connect and serve others through your life—whether in person or online.

2 Personalize Your Feed

WARM-UP

- What is your favorite social media app? Why?
- Do you remember when you first signed up for social media? What were the online activities then?
- What's your favorite pastime online?

WORD *⁶Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, ⁷rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving. ⁸See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to Christ. ⁹For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily, ¹⁰and you have been filled in him, who is the head of all rule and authority. **COLOSSIANS 2:6-10***

Social media has permanently changed our daily lives. While there are ideas and thoughts online that could be beneficial for us, there are also things that could turn out to be harmful or even detrimental. Our use of social media and digital tools can easily mold us and shape us according to a different set of ways, values, and priorities instead of the ways, values, and priorities of God's kingdom.

Social media is a place where scams, fake news, and even half-truths can be propagated. The apostle Paul, in the letter to the Colossians, reminds the church who already knows the ways and word of God not to be taken *captive by philosophy and empty deceit*. Perhaps in our terms today, that could be the equivalent of not being scammed by false beliefs.

As believers, how does our faith guide our use of social media? Do we accept everything we see in our feed or timeline, or can we personalize and filter this? What feeds our souls, and how can we be watchful of what we see and read? If we are followers of Jesus Christ, God's word is our filter, standard, and truth. Just as we can adjust the physical settings and algorithms of our apps and devices to personalize the information we receive, we can also filter what goes in our hearts and minds with a biblical worldview. In this lesson, we will look at how we can apply this as digital content consumers.

1 | Be filled with God's word.

*⁶Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, ⁷rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving. **COLOSSIANS 2:6-7***

Reading and studying the Bible help us know God better and become familiar with His truth. When our minds are filled with the word of God, being discerning about what we believe becomes second nature. Much like Christian living, we may be prudent about our use of social media not by avoiding it but by running toward the ways and the word of God. How do you personally practice diligence in reading the Bible? What did Paul recommend believers to do in Colossians 3:16?

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2 | Discern what you consume.

*See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to Christ. **COLOSSIANS 2:8***

Understanding how social media works is also important. When we talk to family and friends, we know that we can choose what to accept as true and what not to believe. It is similar with social media. Aside from choosing what we read or watch, we can also filter which ideas to entertain and accept. Is it in line with God's truth? Well-written or produced content can be held up against biblical truth. If we are mindful about the media we consume—the books we read or the movies we watch—we can also be mindful about the content we consume. What are some questions you ask yourself when you are using social media? How do you know when you need to stop consuming certain content?

3 | Walk in wisdom.

Walk in wisdom toward outsiders, making the best use of the time. **COLOSSIANS 4:5**

Being wise about our social media use and consumption includes being wise with our time. Has the time spent on our social media negatively affected our daily responsibilities like work or studies? Has it helped or hindered connections in your most important relationships? How can you be more wise with the time you spend on social media?

APPLICATION

- What is one personal guideline or parameter on social media use you can try out this week?
- How has social media affected your way of life? Your relationships? Your priorities?
- In the past week, how have you spent your time on social media? What can you do differently based on our topic today?

PRAYER

- Thank God for His word which sheds light to our situations today. Pray that you would spend more time filling yourself with God's truth and have a greater hunger for God's word.
- Ask the Holy Spirit for wisdom and discernment every time you are on social media and when you encounter ideas that are not biblical.
- Pray for those you know who spend a considerable amount of time consuming social media. Ask God for grace and wisdom on how to help one another be more wise in how you use your time.

3 Engage Online

WARM-UP

- Do you follow any personalities or channels online? Which are your favorites and why?
- If you could create your own social media channel, what would it be about?
- Do you read comment sections of product reviews or online content? Why or why not?

WORD *¹²Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, ¹³bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. ¹⁴And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. **COLOSSIANS 3:12-14***

The past two lessons have reminded us how we can look at ourselves and social media through the lens of the Bible. Anyone who has a social media account is considered a potential content creator, because we make posts, write comments, reply to others, and share what we like. These all contribute to the conversation online. While most people tend to highlight their lives in their posts, as believers, we are called to reflect Christ and be His witnesses. This should be our primary filter when we project ourselves. Posting online is not about putting our best foot forward; it's about drawing people to Christ. We do this through our online content and contribution as well as our spoken words and lives offline. By diving into Paul's letter to the Colossians, we can find three action points for Christian living, which can also apply to our social media use and behavior.

1 | Put on compassionate hearts.

¹²Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, ¹³bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. **COLOSSIANS 3:12-13**

Social media is neither negative nor positive. Rather, it is a medium that often puts on loudspeakers the internal attitude of our hearts. This letter to the Colossians reminds us of the attitudes we should have that motivate our behavior, and this can apply to our behavior online. What is in our hearts when we are commenting or creating a post? What is our tone? The content we create may provide us a glimpse of the status of our hearts. How does a compassionate heart, with *kindness, humility, meekness, and patience* look like online?

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2 | Do everything in the name of the Lord.

And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him. **COLOSSIANS 3:17**

Although Colossians was written many years before the rise of social media, this verse can guide us when we create online content, post, or comment. We are exhorted to do everything in the name of the Lord. This means that we do all things knowing that we represent Christ so our behavior should reflect His character and will. We can think of posting and creating content similar to how we discipline our words and thoughts (Colossians 4:6). Though we are free to speak

our mind, whether positive or negative, we are to seriously consider if what we say or do reflects God and is pleasing to Him. This should not be seen as a limitation. Rather, it is a guide that teaches us to be wise when we create content or comment on social media. This means representing Him in all that we do and say and not merely sharing Bible verses online. What do you think using social media *in the name of the Lord* looks like?

3 | Be gracious when you post or comment.

⁵Walk in wisdom toward outsiders, making the best use of the time. ⁶Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person.

COLOSSIANS 4:5-6

Being gracious includes acting in a way that is kind and courteous. Are we gracious when we post or comment? Are we kind and courteous? Do we give others the benefit of the doubt when responding to their posts or comments? Being gracious online is living out the *compassionate hearts* we are admonished to put on (Colossians 3:12). Being kind or courteous online can help us determine which online activities are worth our time. We can ask ourselves, does my social media activity reflect the same person I am—online and offline?

APPLICATION

- How did you create, post, or comment on social media this week? What did you learn from this meeting and how will you begin to practice it?
- In light of your faith in God, which online activity or platform is most challenging for you? What do you think you should do about it, starting today?
- By God's grace, which of the three points would you like to live out this week? What is your desire and prayer for what you do online?

PRAYER

- Pray for humility, that we may think of others better than ourselves, putting the interests of others before ours.
- Pray that in every word, post, and comment, you would reflect God's love. Ask God for the grace to show Christlikeness—online and offline.
- Pray for those you interact with online. Ask God to draw them closer to Himself and to give you opportunities to share God's love and truth with them.

4 Share Your Story

WARM-UP

- What was one interesting post or quote you recently saw online that you just had to share? What was it about?
- Have you found a long lost friend or relative through social media? Tell us about it.
- If you were to start a social media page or group online, what would it be for? What cause or concept (e.g., fitness, fatherhood, a book club) would you want it to be about? Why?

WORD *²Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving. ³At the same time, pray also for us, that God may open to us a door for the word, to declare the mystery of Christ, on account of which I am in prison—⁴that I may make it clear, which is how I ought to speak.*

COLOSSIANS 4:2-4

The “share” button is probably one of the most interesting features of the Internet and social media. Whatever the value of the content, with just one click, hundreds (if not thousands) of viewers and content consumers can be reached. Because of this button that calls us to action, anything can go viral and reach a wide audience. That’s why content creators are always looking for and producing things that are engaging and relevant.

As followers of Jesus, we have been entrusted with one message we are called to share with the world: the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. This message is the power of God to change lives, restore families, and transform nations. And yet we struggle about when and how we will share this, especially in the digital age. How do we engage real people on the other side of a screen and inspire authentic disciples through technology? Here are three principles

that can help us navigate the digital space so we can engage people, preach the gospel, and make disciples.

1 | Continue steadfastly in prayer.

Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving. **COLOSSIANS 4:2**

Prayer and intercession are essential for effective evangelism and discipleship. Because all spiritual work demands spiritual resources, we are to nurture kind mindfulness in our social media interaction that flows from a growing prayerful lifestyle. The enemy won't just sit down whenever we demonstrate and declare the good news of Christ, whether that's in person or online. So we build ourselves up in the presence of God through prayer in order to be bold in our social media engagements and interactions. Watchfulness will be the result of a prayerful lifestyle and thanksgiving causes us to see opportunities to lead people to faith in Jesus. How are you intentionally growing yourself to be more prayerful in your social media use? Share some ideas and practices on how you show compassion to the lost.

2 | Look for open doors for God's word.

At the same time, pray also for us, that God may open to us a door for the word, to declare the mystery of Christ, on account of which I am in prison . . . **COLOSSIANS 4:3**

If prayer prepares us to engage people with the gospel, then we should be ready to declare it clearly whenever we are prompted to do so. For the gospel to be proclaimed, words are truly necessary. Therefore, with the power of

the Holy Spirit, we are to open our mouths and declare to people what Christ has done for us. This can be done at any given moment, even in the digital space. What are some of the ways we can declare and tell the gospel story on social media? Recall a time when you preached the gospel using technology.

3 | Speak a clear message.

. . . that I may make it clear, which is how I ought to speak.

COLOSSIANS 4:4

Sharing our thoughts on social media may often be subject to different interpretations, which can lead to our intended message becoming distorted. This can happen even as we represent God in our comments and posts. We see in Paul's prayer that he desired to preach the gospel clearly as he should. In the same manner, it is important that we speak with clarity so we may point people to Christ, not ourselves. Just as it is necessary to post or comment with the right attitude, it is important that we communicate our message in a manner that everyone can understand, rather than a select few. How would the gospel impact you differently if the details that you appreciate the most were left out?

APPLICATION

- How prayerful are you when it comes to using social media and the use of digital tools and platforms? How can you grow more in this area starting this week?
- Are you strongly connected with other believers of varying generations? What can you do to build or maintain these relationships?
- How can you be more intentionally kind and compassionate when it comes to interacting with real people online? Share at least one idea you have in mind.

PRAYER

- Thank God for the access we have to Him through prayer. Pray that we would be more prayerful, compassionate, and compelled by love, even in our use of social media.
- Ask God for open doors for you to minister to people in the digital space. Pray that these opportunities would lead to genuine connections and authentic discipleship.
- Pray for one another, acknowledging that God is beyond technology and that this is but one of the tools that can be used for His redemptive purpose.

⁶Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, ⁷rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving. ⁸See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to Christ. ⁹For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily, ¹⁰and you have been filled in him, who is the head of all rule and authority. COLOSSIANS 2:6-10

As people who have received a new identity and citizenship in Christ, God is calling us to be in the world but not of the world. Since our social media platforms have become extensions of our real lives, this calling also applies in the way we navigate the digital world.

Connected aims to strengthen and keep the believers from the ideas and influences of their generation by exhorting them to have a firm grasp of the good news of Christ's preeminence: His Lordship over all of creation—both the physical and the spiritual, the seen and the unseen. As carriers of His light in this digital world, we are to rediscover who Christ is, what He has done for us, and how He expects us to live.

TOPICS

- Create Your Profile
- Personalize Your Feed
- Engage Online
- Share Your Story



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