

The Snare of Google

How much should children of God know of the world, its people, and its practices? At what point does knowledge of evil affect righteous living? Is Gospel simplicity and innocence a thing of the past? The devil has always been busy getting his "news" into the hands of the masses. He has hijacked postal mail, radio, television, and now internet to carry his corruption in abundance. In our "Google Society," one now has the unprecedented capability of asking the medium questions on any subject that comes to mind. These "features" come with the package of accepting the internet for legitimate use. We do well to continue the search for safety and godliness in a world of evil.

Romans 16:19 says, "For your obedience is come abroad unto all men. I am glad therefore on your behalf: but yet I would have you wise unto that which is good, and simple concerning evil." Is this still a valid teaching for us today? Are we sure we are accomplishing this? Philippians 2:15 challenges us, "That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world."

The Scriptures also hold up the call to study the Word and fill our mind with The Truth (2Tim 2:15 and 2Tim 3:15-17). What our mind is filled with will affect our choices and responses. It will affect our loves and pursuits.

Is it acceptable for us to know the popular movie stars, the renowned singers, and the sports stars of our day? But all you have to do is Google the name, and you can learn about them. You don't need to watch the movies or listen to the music. You just keep Google handy, and you can be knowledgeable of the world and its people.

When my parents named me, they were thinking of Luke in the Bible. I remember being out in public works and telling someone my name. They said, "Oh, Luke Skywalker." I was innocent and had no clue who they meant. They were shocked that I didn't know this character. Since that time, I have met business people who connect my name with the Bible. I appreciate that connection even though many of those people do not practice the Bible like we do.

What happens when our youth know about the world's youth stars and follow them in the news? Should we be alarmed when our young people know the sports teams and their top players? Is there a price that we pay for this "connection" to the world? Or is it all innocent knowledge that won't hurt a thing?

Someone once asked me what I thought about the practice of kneeling before your girlfriend to propose marriage to her. I didn't know this was even done. A simple Google search can lead you to all kinds of practices and unique spots to propose marriage. Is this helpful for the Christian couple? Will this contribute to solid home life and godliness? Or will it teach us the latest fads of the world?

How shall we do when we want to give some roses to a shut-in? Do you realize that the world has a system of meanings set up around the giving of roses? The color and number of roses are supposed to mean something. I shouldn't even tell you this because perhaps you were simple concerning this. But

should we feel compelled to know and do according to the world's pattern of rose-giving? What happened to Gospel simplicity of picking Grandma a few roses and cheering her up?

I believe there are several subtle snares we should ponder deeply on this subject. Is it safe to say that fascination with worldly wisdom will lead us in the paths of the world? Can we expect to receive help from the world to live the Christian life? Will we replace parental and brotherhood council with research from the web?

Another snare is the time we spend with God, and His Word can be robbed by worldly pursuits. We should stop at the end of a day and compare how often we turned to Google or electronic news media with how much we turned to God and His Word. How many minutes did we spend praying, how many minutes surfing? How much Godly meditation time did I have today? Do I sort out life's questions by turning to the Word or the world?

There is also the Satanic voice saying, "You are missing something if you are a simple, innocent child of God." Every one of us faces that pull toward the world, but it is especially strong for youth. Is it wise to feed this quest? Will feeding it make it easier to be a Bible believing, separated Christian?

Knowledge of evil, at first, is repulsive to Christians. But repeated exposure to the reality of wickedness does eventually bring callousness to it, and sin no longer appears so sinful. For this reason, we need constant vigilance to view society and its evils through the lens of the Word, not the evil tinted lens of the world!

We also face social pressures when others seem to know this bit of worldly knowledge, and we are in the dark. We can feel inferior. Others can talk about people, news, events, and practices we never heard about. Family gathering and church picnic conversations can center on the world's popular subjects. We can begin to feel like we must get these connections to keep up with what is going on in the world around us.

Families can feel like they must do web research on potential names for their children, so they avoid a name of a bad character in the movie world. What happened to simply using a name book and choosing a name with a good meaning regardless of the movie or political world? What happened to the appreciation for good Bible names? Must my parents feel bad today because they gave me a name that makes some think of a movie character?

The heart and soul of this burden is the question, "How versed should a child of God be in the worldly wisdom of our day?" How much pressure should we feel to keep abreast with news, names, events, and practices? This question begs for an answer in our day. If we will keep the faith, we must give this question a fair answer.

It is true, Christians need to be alert and understand that some words and expressions of the world have bad meanings. We should be cautiously skeptical towards the world's popular phrases and terms. We should choose good names for our children. There is a place for awareness of things we should not be associated with. Parents need to help their children avoid bad words, improper gestures, etc. But this is often done best by mature adults fellowshiping together and helping each other with these things.

Google is relatively new. Internet use has not yet proved the test of time for faithful Christian use. Will we be cautiously skeptical of the world's pressures upon us? Will we be alert to inroads of worldliness that may choke our spiritual lives? Will we unashamedly restrict our intake from worldly sources while increasing our intake of Bible study, worship, meditation, and prayer?

~Luke Bennetch