

// Parent Ministry

The Teen's Guide to Social Media & Mobile Devices

21 Tips to Wise Posting in an Insecure World

Author: Jonathan McKee

REVIEW:

A couple quick things to understand about *The Teen's Guide to Social Media & Mobile Devices*. While this book's title includes the word "teen" in it, this is a book for more than just teens. This book is a great book to be read together with parents of late elementary and middle school students. While the book is written for young people, it is an outstanding parent and youth pastor resource. Like all of the other books written by McKee, this book is spot-on and perfect.

He provides tips that are just a couple quick pages that can be easily read. The tips are spelled out clearly with highlighted headings and often concise bullet points. Each of the tips ends with on-point "questions to ponder" and "something to think about" that can easily create discussion and conversation with parents.

Once again, like the other 20+ books written by McKee, this is a hands-down winner, and well worth the purchase and the read.

SNAPSHOT

Tip #1: Love the One You're With

"Discovering the secret of 'social in a social media world'" is that the smartphone-generation has become so dependent on their phones that they have become anti-social. It is seen through a few things: 1.) *Diminished ability to recognize facial expressions.* 2.) *Lack of empathy.* 3.) *A decrease in close friends.* Instead of letting a smart phone ruin your social life, put it back in your pocket and really connect with others.

Tip #2: Peak at Your Privacy Settings

Do you know who's peeking at you? Privacy settings are free tools to help you protect yourself. Here are some easy ways to be safe: 1. *Privacy Settings Enabled.* 2.) *Friends Only.* 3.) *Location Setting Turned Almost Completely Off.* 4.) *No Signing in with Social Media.* These are simple ways to stay safe.

Tip #3: Nothing You Post is Temporary.

Ever wish you could "unpost" something? Think about all the words and images you post because they leave a lasting impression on friends, family and your potential bosses!? 93% of companies are now evaluating a candidate's social media posts. Be careful what you post, and protect yourself because nothing is temporary online.

Tip #4 The Whole Picture of Those Pictures.

A deeper look at the effects of porn reveals the effects on both guys and girls in our culture. Guys are now suffering from physical issues and addiction while girls are struggling with the social expectations. We are God's original design, and pornography hurts you and hurts God. Steer clear of it by following II Timothy 2:22's advice "*Running Away*" and "*Seeking Positive advisors*".

Tip #5: Don't Do This Alone.

Seeking out a mentor is finding someone that you can talk to about what is going on with you as you live in a digital world. Choose a mentor that is: 1.) *The Same Faith* 2.) *The Same Gender* and 3.) *Someone Who Models Leadership Qualities You Desire.*



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Tip #6: Unmasked.

The myth of anonymity is that you can post something that will be short lived and anonymous. Thinking we can anonymously post something on social media allows us to think we can avoid responsibility and scrutiny. There are 2 problems: nothing on the internet is truly temporary, and when people do something they think they can get away with, they do stupid things. There is no real anonymity online.

Tip #7: Yes, Still Don't Talk to Strangers

Do you really know who you are hanging out with? A screen doesn't change the advice your parents gave you, "don't talk to strangers." Simple hints to help you online: 1.) Don't chat with someone online you haven't met personally. 2.) Be careful of people you don't know trying to get to know you online, in a game, or a private digital setting. We live in a messed up world, and there are people who are seeking out young people for their own sinful purposes, so don't "talk to strangers!"

Tip #8: Take More "Selflessies"

Recognize when selfies become too "selfy" when: 1.) You're so busy documenting the moment, you miss the moment. 2.) Your pictures don't even look like you. 3.) Too much of you, is showing. 4.) You're all about the likes.

Tip #9: Like Me

Uncovering your true identity is understanding your value does not come from likes or follows. Popularity does not equal value. What is more valuable, your outward or your inward? I Samuel 16:3 tell us God's value is your heart and the inward, not a person's outward appearance.

Tip #10: Know the Apps Before You Snap

Exploring the intricacies of Snapchat reveals: 1.) Snapchat was created as the best way to sext. 2.) Snapchat pictures don't always disappear. Snapchat is a communication tool that can be used for both bad and good, depending on the user. If you are not sure, ask yourself some questions like, "what is my motivation for using snapchat?", "what would my parents and others think if they found my correspondence?" and "does snapchat lead me into temptation?"

Tip #11: Re-evaluate Your Screen Time.

Trimming hours means asking how many hours a day do you spend connected to some type of media. The average teenager (13-18) spends 8 hours and 56 minutes, and the average tween (8-12) spends 5 hours 55 minutes a day connected. It might be time for you to re-evaluate your screen time.

Tip #12: Frequent Tech-Free Zones

Looking for space. Consider creating "tech free zones" by trying a couple things like: 1.) A complete media fast. 2.) No-Tech Tuesday. 3.) No tech at the table (meals) 4.) Tech-free outdoor adventures and even 5.) Hot Tubbing! Each one of these things will create some much need space in your life and spiritual growth.

Tip #13: Friend Mom and Dad

Connecting with the people who matter most means being "friends" and "followers" with your parents first in ways that both of you are casual and respectful. According to Ephesians 6:1-3, "Things will go well for you..." if you do. It is a promise that if you respect your parents and they learn to respect you, things will go well for your family even when it comes to social media!

Tip #14: Dissect Your Entertainment Environment

Rethinking the music, TV, and videos you watch. Music and media can influence the way you dress and your behavior. Music has an influence on us when it comes to risky behavior and our emotions. Be on guard from being brainwashed by entertainment and media. Romans 12:2 challenges us to change our way of thinking and be careful to not let the world's ideas form us.

Tip #15: Pause

Remember to think before you post. The simplest and easiest way to keep out of trouble is to take a couple extra seconds to pause and think before you post something online. 57% of people have posted something on social media that they regretted afterwards, and 20% of young people post or text something they regret at least once a week. The Bible offers some great advice in James 1:19 when it says, "Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to become angry." If we take a moment, we will save ourselves a lifetime of regret.

Tip #16: Crush Criticism and Cruelty

Discovering the power of kinds words will change our presence on social media and online. The world of social media has become critical and cruel. Do you realize the power of words? Proverbs 12:18 says, "The words of the reckless pierce like swords, but the tongue of the wise brings healing". What are your words online? Reckless and piecing or wise and healing?

Tip #17: Recognize the Distraction

Texting, driving...and killing. Which is a bigger danger? Texting and driving or drinking and driving? According to *Car and Driver* magazine's research, the reaction time of a drunk driver is quicker than the driver that is texting. Young drivers need to recognize the deadly distraction of using technology or devices while driving. It might be a matter of life and death.

Tip #18: I See London, I See France

Why are you showing your underpants? Our world is making sending nude pictures and sexting not a big deal, but in fact, it is still illegal in most states. Most young people do not realize the consequences legally, emotionally, and spiritually. I Corinthians 6:18-20 challenges us to *run from* sexual sin and immorality of any kind. This goes beyond just having sex and includes acting in ways that are impure.

Tip #19: No Secrets

The implications of "Finsta" 1.) Whenever you create a fake account without your name you lack accountability. 2.) Fake social media accounts give you a false sense of freedom. 3.) When you create an account without your parents knowing, you are breaking trust. Don't be a fake; be real with God and others.

20: Sleep Matters

Saying "nighty night" to distractions by asking yourself some questions about your technology: 1.) Does your technology make you feel more awake using it right before bed? 2.) Do you have a hard time putting it down right before bed? 3.) Do you keep your device by your bed? 4.) Do you end up going places online you shouldn't at night when you are alone? If you said "yes," it is time for you to turn off your devices and take some time for yourself to get some undistracted sleep.

Tip #21: Look Up

Staying aware of your surroundings. Technology use has gone up, but our awareness of our physical world around us has gone down. We are missing the important things for the unimportant things. Unimportant things distract us from the real important things of God. Paul's instructions in II Timothy 3:14-17 to young Timothy are to live a life of faith and to remember the things he was taught and what is most important. Even amid a world of distractions, our focus needs to remain on God, His word and His truths.

As always this "snapshot" is a very quick overview of an excellent book. The above is a very quick glimpse of 21 great and insightful tips about social media use and technology. We strongly encourage you to find this book at your local bookstore, at your favorite online store, or go directly to Jonathan McKee's websites:

<http://www.jonathanmckeewrites.com> , <http://www.thesource4ym.com>, and <http://www.thesource4parents.com> These sites also offer a wide variety of regular posts, resources, and updates on culture, entertainment, and more.