

parent youth

CONNECTION

march 2009//

Would Jesus have facebook?

Written by Heather Slipkevych

ur•gent [úrjənt] adj.

1. requiring immediate action: calling for immediate action or attention

Have you ever sat and pondered the meaning of a word? Said it to yourself over and over again until you start to feel strange saying it? Wrote it on a piece of paper and stared at it?

One day I decided to ponder a word. The word was “*urgent*.” I had always heard the word urgent and had a loose understanding of its true meaning. My understanding of the word was that if something was urgent it was very important and had to be dealt with quickly, but I never considered the full meaning. One day I looked it up and noticed something peculiar about its Webster.com definition. *Urgent* is a word that demands from us. It requires us to do something. And not just soon or in the next few minutes or when we get to it, but immediately. It calls us. It demands our attention.

I tried to think of things in my life that were truly *urgent* and could not be held off even a moment. Things like breathing and sustaining life were high on my list, loving my family and friends closely behind, and succeeding at school and work trailing after that. As I sat back and looked at my measly little list, I suddenly realized there was a huge hole in the inventory of my urgency, sharing the Gospel. My world was literally shattered as I tried to wrap my mind around the thought that Jesus could return today and who would I have helped save? There is *urgency* in the Gospel. There is urgency in telling people about God’s salvation story. There is *urgency* in showing the unsaved the perfect love of our Savior. There is urgency in growing the Kingdom of God.

Heather will be teaching a seminar on how to use social networking to share our story about Christ at Disciple Now on March 20-21.

parent youth connection is produced by daniel riemenschneider, youth director @ bloomingdale church

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The Facebook logo, consisting of the word "facebook" in white lowercase letters on a dark blue rectangular background.The Twitter logo, consisting of the word "twitter" in a light blue, lowercase, sans-serif font with a white outline, set against a white background.The Myspace logo, featuring the text "myspace.com" in white lowercase letters on a dark blue background, with the tagline "a place for friends" in smaller white lowercase letters below it.

Take a look at the Great Commission found in Matthew 28:19-20. It reads, "Therefore GO and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." Something interesting, Jesus doesn't make a suggestion. He doesn't say "well maybe you could go" or "I think it would be best to go." No! Jesus demands us to GO. Just as the word urgent demands action, Jesus demands all His followers to spring into action. Jesus doesn't just tell us to go, He also gives us a purpose. But let's think about this a little deeper. The task at hand isn't quite as simple as it may seem. Jesus doesn't tell us to recruit followers, or form a group of believers. He says to make disciples. A disciple is someone who believes and fully follows the law. And not just of a few loved ones or a small group of classmates, but the nations. He commands us to share His word with the all of the unsaved in the world and teach them to be devoted disciples of Jesus Christ.

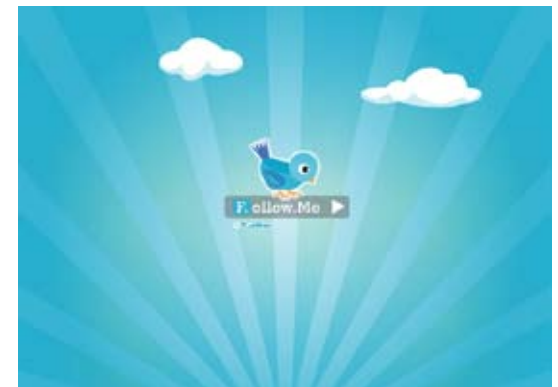
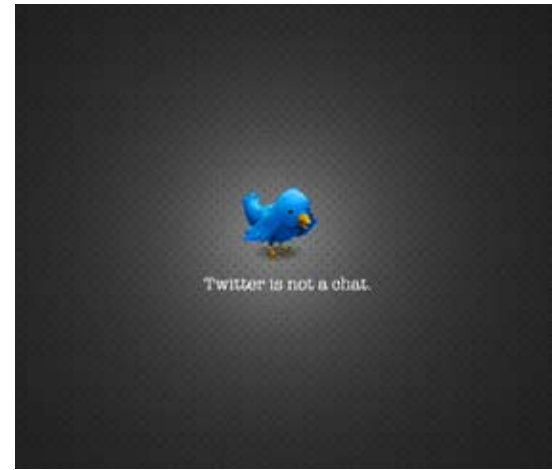
In Jesus day it was customary for large groups to assemble to listen to someone speak. So the most effective way for Jesus to reach the large crowds was in fact to preach to them. Common practice, however, evolves as quickly as time passes. Today, people are constantly on the move. Time is money and people can't seem to fit enough minutes in their day. People no longer congregate in large groups on a daily basis like they did back when Jesus was on Earth, so it would not make sense for me to assemble a large group of unsaved people to share the Gospel in a seminar style. However, God has equipped us with many modern day tools. There are many Christian groups targeting the unsaved through movies, radio, television, magazine articles, newspaper ads, and even clothing and accessories. Something in particular has really caught my attention recently. Social Networking is a concept and practice that has just exploded its way into our daily lives. It is hard to meet someone who has never used or heard of Facebook or Myspace or Twitter, to name a few.

The site that has always intrigued me the most is Facebook. People of all ages and all walks of life have Facebook accounts. The unique thing about Facebook is that it truly is versatile. It is constantly updating and conforming to changes in the user. One of my favorite features is the "Notes" feature. A person can write a Note and post it on their page. They can also "tag" their friends. When a person is tagged in a note or picture, they are sent a notification. The average person has about 50 online "friends" on Facebook who they never encounter face-to-face. Could you imagine the impact Christ could have on Facebook if every Christian shared the Gospel with even just 10 of their online friends? If every Christian wrote a Note about their story and tagged their non-believing friends, wouldn't that be awesome?

Another favorite feature is the “Status Updates” feed. Every person has a status line on their account attached to their name. You can update your status whenever you want and say whatever you want as many times as you want. About a month ago I started taking loose data of status changes. I noticed a few things. First of all, my Christian friends changed their status less often than my non-Christian friends. Statuses were more likely to have a Bible verse, prayer request, praise report or some sort of Christ honoring message on Sundays, Mondays and Tuesdays. I also noticed that girls were almost twice as likely to put a Bible verse or prayer request than guys. Relationship status also made a HUGE difference. People who are single put up more Bible verses than anything else. The interesting thing about your status is that as soon as you update your status, it is entered into the status feed (a list of all your friends status lines). At this point all of your friends have immediate access to your most recent thoughts or revelations or prayer needs.

I am a firm believer of the saying “if you’re going to talk the talk you better walk the walk.” We need to be especially careful of things we say and do in front of our non-believing friends. If you say you are a follower of Christ, it is your duty to act like it! Jesus calls us to GO. In this day and age, the internet is rising to be the most popular and powerful media tool. The world is quite literally at your fingertips, so by taking a stand and proclaiming your faith by laying it out there for anyone to see, hopefully one day the world will find its way to Jesus through the world wide web!

At Disciple Now I will be challenging the teens to take part in an online mission trip. The point of the trip is to be intentional about talking to our unsaved online friends about what God has done in our lives and hopefully find opportunity to share the Gospel with them on Facebook. **What a testimony to say we helped disciple someone on Facebook...**



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