

CHRISTIAN HEADS, HEARTS, AND HANDS

ARTICLES TO FORM US AS FOLLOWERS OF "THE WAY"

How Do You Want to Be Remembered?

by Jimmy Wallace

A few years ago, I visited the home of someone who had recently passed away. I remember an upstairs room where he kept an enormous collection of model cars. Each car was still in its original packaging. One entire wall was covered with cars on shelves. It was clear that the man had been an avid car collector and treasured his possessions. Somehow, though, at that moment the items seemed a bit unimportant.

I saw a kinship between this man and myself. I am also a collector (mostly of comic books instead of cars) and the experience made me think. My garage is similarly filled with boxes of comic books. Like his cars, my collection offers me temporary entertainment, but ultimately fails to offer something lasting. My visit to this man's car collection put things into perspective for me.

In the years since, I've attended many funerals. Each funeral has been unique and special in its own right. Some were full church services with a small portion in the middle where the family got up and spoke. I've also been to funerals in public places which were not religious at all.

Inevitably, I find myself comparing and contrasting the various funerals. During some of the funerals, very little was said about the person who passed away. Instead, the family members would talk about their own feelings about the person. In other funerals, the person who died was described in great detail. I walked away feeling like I had known them, even if I hadn't. At some funeral's, people described the deceased person's professional accomplishments, hobbies, or how much they loved their family.

I can't help but reflect on my own life when attending these funerals. I wonder what people would say about me at *my* funeral. Would people talk about how many long hours I worked? Would they talk about how many comic books I had amassed? More importantly, would anyone mention that I was a Christian?

On more than one occasion I have been blessed to attend funerals of devout Christians. Their family and friends all got up and talked about how important their faith was to them. The officiating pastor even used the opportunity to present the gospel. But when I look at my own life, would *that* be the kind of funeral people would give me?

I hate to admit it, but I think there are many people in my life who, if asked to speak at my funeral, might be happy to tell some stories of good times we had together. But I think many wouldn't even mention my faith. I hate to think that someone could know me and not know how important Jesus is to me, but I have to be honest.

These funerals have been a convicting. I know this life is not all about how I am remembered. In fact, I know that if I were not remembered at all it would not be a big deal in the grand scheme of things. In the end, it is God who should be honored and remembered before me. But if I am going to be remembered, I would like to think my love of God would be foremost on the things people thought about. These sad events have been a blessing to me; a motivation to live a life which would demonstrate my love and commitment to Jesus.

How will you be remembered?

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Social Media and Alcohol

by Justin Whitmel Earley

We know that sipping from a flask all day every day means you have a serious problem. I want to suggest that sipping from the flask of Facebook all day should be regarded as similarly dangerous.

Over the past year, as I've spoken about technology and *The Common Rule*, I've settled into a metaphor: social media should be seen like alcohol. Some people should abstain. Everyone should approach with caution. And no one should use it without limits.

I was encouraged to see an Atlantic article last week making a similar comparison.

One of my great hopes for my generation of the church is that we would be a light to the world in how (and how not) to use technology. So I wanted to pass a small summary onto you.

Three Reasons Social Media is Like Alcohol

1. *It is Addictive.* This means you are not as in control as you think you are. Remember, there are 1,000 people on the other side of this screen paid inordinate amounts of money to get you to keep scrolling.
2. *It Changes Your Mental Health.* This means it is not neutral. Your interactions with yourself, your family, and your friends are changed because of what you do with social media. You must recognize that to use it appropriately.
3. *Someone Needs to Teach You How to Use It.* This is one of the hardest things about our cultural moment. Because this technology is so new, none of us had parents to teach us how to use it, set boundaries, and practice moderation. But that doesn't mean we can't start to learn now, teach our kids, and help our friends.

What Can You Do? (A lot, actually...)

1. *Use rhythms and norms to set limits.* Just like it would be a HUGE red flag if you were drinking constantly through the day, you shouldn't be scrolling constantly through the day. Or even everyday! Set off times and off days. See the habits of The Common Rule if you want help with this. We shouldn't be drunk on wine (Eph. 5:18), but we shouldn't be wasted away by social media either. Instead, we should be filled with the Holy Spirit. Habits matter here, both for alcohol and screens.
2. *Read paper books, exercise and talk to people face to face.* Social media is like alcohol, but it's not heroin where one use will leave you forever changed. You CAN get better and feel better. Reading, exercise, and talking to people face to face are all things that change you (and your mental health) for the better. Note that this is serious business for Christians. I believe one of our primary witnesses to the world right now should be beautiful communities. We should be living wise, healthy, and relational lives that reflect the hope within us - so that people will ask! (1 Peter 3:15)
3. *Don't Let Your Kids (or Friends) Have Unlimited Use.* We would never leave open bottles of alcohol all around the house - why would we leave electronic drugs called screens everywhere for unlimited use? You need to teach your kids how to have wise limits. Likewise, wouldn't you help if you saw a friend drinking all the time? If they are on social media all the time - help them by saying something. (There's a whole chapter in *Habits of the Household* devoted to Screentime and thinking about healthy limits for kids.)