

STUDY NOTES

ANTI-SOCIAL

a series at New City Church

www.newcityphx.com/sermons

The following content is based on the message "You Mad, Bro? Enemies, Outrage, and the Gospel" on 9/16/18 at New City Church in Phoenix, AZ. The following is not meant to be a full synopsis but rather a brief look at the main ideas. To use this Study Guide effectively you must listen to the message found at <http://www.newcityphx.com/sermons/>.

Leaders using these study notes for group study and reflection should read the Biblical text thoroughly before beginning, using this resource as assistance and not relying solely on this material for insight. We encourage all leaders to pray and ask the Spirit for revelation as they lead their respective community groups.

PRAYER

Pray and ask God to lead the discussion as everyone gets to share.

SCRIPTURE: 1 CORINTHIANS 13:4-7; LUKE 6:27-36

SOCIAL MEDIA AND OUTRAGE

Social media didn't create outrage, but it certainly helps proliferate outrage culture.

"When it comes to American society, outrage culture prevents us from engaging in the exchange of ideas, and it keeps us from learning from one another. It makes civil discourse nearly impossible. Conversations become nothing more than contests to see which side has more of a reason to be offended. Hatred is everywhere; empathy and its cousin, civility, are nowhere. For in this culture of reflexive outrage, empathy is weakness. Listening? Surrender. When discourse is a competition instead of a dialectic, there are winners and losers; and one wins by persuading the other side (or at least scoring more re-tweets), even though we learn most from engaging our opponents. Outrage culture turns productive discourse into dumb competition."

- Mike Shammas, former editor of Harvard Law Review

- *Have you ever been in an argument on social media? What was that like?*
- *In your own words, describe the discourse that you observe on social media.*

Again, social media isn't the enemy, but it proliferates outrage culture. Here are two reasons why.

1) Social media isolates. It separates us from others. On social media, you only have to interact with people who have the same interests as you. Real relationships require us to deal with people we don't like.

"Social media gives everybody their own little world of self-selected meaning, the tools for a truly abstracted, self-determined universe; you can look at anyone or anything the way you want to look at it. Your friends are networks of self-reinforcement, chosen click by click."

- The New Yorker, October 31, 2017

I suspect that social media—with its capacity to collate like-minded people into echo chambers promoting brevity at the expense of nuance, likes and re-tweets at the expense of knowledge—is helping outrage culture proliferate.

- Jack Dorsey, CEO Twitter

- *How have you felt isolated, despite having friends on social media?*

2) Social media demonizes the other. We hate the other because we lose the nuance of actual relationships. Social media never gives us the whole person or whole conversation. It can't.

- *Why is important to have healthy interaction with people who aren't like you?*

"THOSE WHO HAVE EARS, LET THEM HEAR"

If you are a follower of Jesus, Jesus's command to love enemies is for you. Jesus did not command his followers "to feel" in a certain way. Love isn't a feeling, but an action. Emotions can be evoked, but not commanded. Actions and the will can be commanded.

We aren't called to "feel" a certain way, but to act in a certain way.

The things that people post on social media are the things that are in their hearts. Matthew 15:18 says, "But the things that come out of the mouth come from the heart". In today's context, we could say: "Out of the heart, the hands type." Thus, what Jesus says about our enemies, applies to our social media presence.

Here is His "to-do" list for us interacting with people we disagree with:

- 1) Love**
- 2) Do good**
- 3) Bless**
- 4) Pray for**

- *How should these acts of love be lived out—or typed out—on social media?*
- *Why is the church called to a higher standard of love than the culture?*
- *Pray with each other to act out this "to-do" list with your enemies.*