

## Matthew 23 and Social Networking

“Everything they do is for me to see” It has now gone from a moment or situational to a lifestyle 24/7. I think we live this way still today but it looks different. Instead of making our phylacteries wide and tassels on our garments long, we post what we did on facebook, we tweet what we did or are doing. We do things that may not be seen by first hand observers, but we do things that we can make sure everyone knows about one way or the other. I think in some ways this is more sinister. Technology allows us to exploit our fallen natures more widely in this area. Instead of our lives being exhibitionistic at a party or in a crowd, now it can be that way all the time. In the back of our minds we can wonder what people will think when we tweet about this (it can be as simple as hanging with a certain person, playing with our child, or going to a game) or what people’s thoughts will be when we post the picture on facebook, or even when we get a good thought in a time with the Lord, we think about how others may be impressed by us when we put it up on our status, or post that we are now in a specific city or at a special concert. All of our lives can become exhibitionism. We can craft who we want people to think we are, and always be living for our 1242 facebook friends, or our 78 followers on Twitter. When we get big news our first thought is what will people think when I post this....In other words all of our lives can be lived for the blog, the tweet or the status update. I am reminded of the article is facebook mauling our souls from Relevant that talked about this (I think I have it in my leadership/one-on-one folder.) So, no longer is this exhibitionism limited to on the street corners or banquets and synagogues, but it can now happen at 11:00 on a Thursday night before we go to bed.

Instead of they love to be greeted in the marketplaces, I wonder if that could be said “the love to get thumbs up on their status, or have themselves retweeted by others.

I don’t believe that there isn’t a time and a place to use these kind of things. I do, they do serve a purpose. However, I do think that they can be very dangerous if over used. I do think we need to be honest with ourselves and understand the bent of our hearts towards pride, desire for recognition and tendency to want to be perceived in a certain way. We need to be honest about the motivations of our own hearts. This is why I did not come home and post on facebook a picture of our 2 foster kids the day we got them, or even mention it to our fellowship at the retreat after we just got them, or even the next Monday at MNL. Because I knew in my own heart that the whole foster care thing could easily slip into a form of exhibitionism or the motives of my heart would be impure if I allowed myself to do it. I had played the scenario in my head already, what will people think when they find out that Amy and I received foster kids. So, I just couldn’t post it, not because I didn’t want others to know, but because I knew my own heart.

I would say if you catch yourself thinking, I can’t wait to put it on facebook or send out a tweet, then perhaps you shouldn’t do it for a while, or at all. If you catch your first processing of events in your life being about how you will be perceived on these social networks, then I suggest you fast them until your heart is re-oriented. It is now where we can live as if 1200 people are always watching our every move...well, not really, just the moves that I want them to know about. Just the moves that I want them to be aware of. Not my sin, not when I lose my temper with my wife or don’t help with the kids, but instead when I wrestle with them.

The question at the end of the day is what audience do we live for? Do we truly live for an audience of One? Please understand that I deeply believe that our walks with God are incredibly corporate, so I am not talking about hyper individualism, me and God and that is all that matters. But I am talking about the motives of our hearts. Do we do what we do to be seen, like the people in verse 5-6, do we do what we do, post what we post, tweet what we tweet, blog what we blog, so people will see us in some way and we like having a big audience, or do we do it with a motive of glorifying God and not self. Do we even have a secret life anymore (Matt 6)? A secret of life things we do virtuously that is.