

## Are You “Connected”?

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by Wayne Goff

If you asked a young person today what it means to be “connected,” then they might tell you that it means to have electronic and social avenues of communication to the world — computers, smart phones, tablets, internet wifi, with its corresponding electronic media — e-mail, texting, Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat, LinkedIn, Reddit, Pinterest, etc. The more of these kinds of things you use, then the more “connected” you are today. Many businesses and churches are trying to tap into these sources of information and communication to spread their message. This also may help to explain the innumerable “spam” messages you may receive in your e-mail account. “Social networking” is all the rage today.

Prior to the electronic age, if you asked someone if they had “connections,” then you were asking them how many important, powerful people they knew. This is still true today, and sadly, in the business world, jobs are often obtained based on “who you know, not what you know.” You need a connection to someone on the “inside” to get a good job.

Well, this led me to think about the importance of being “connected” *spiritually*. Once again, eternal salvation is based upon “who you know.” *“And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent”* (John 17:3).

To “know Jesus Christ” is to have a personal relationship with Him; to be connected to Him. And how is that done? Through the universal message He ordered to be delivered in His Name! *“And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, ‘All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age. Amen’* (Matthew 28:18–20). Some claim to be “connected” to Jesus without faith and baptism, but they are sadly mistaken. The apostle Paul, who definitely had Divine “connections” wrote through the Holy Spirit: *“Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life”* (Romans 6:3–4). So unless you are “connected” with Jesus’ death in the waters of baptism, you cannot have the forgiveness which His blood provides. You are not yet properly “connected.”

Still others who claim to be “connected” to God profess a kind of “grace” which is *automatic* and *unconditional*. You hear their proponents loudly proclaim: “Christ has done it all!” They then say for you to have this “grace” and “eternal salvation,” all you have to do is accept Jesus into your heart as your personal Savior. But they are **not** “connected” if the Bible is right. *“...When the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who **do not know God** and on those who **do not obey** the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ”* (2 Thessalonians 1:7–8). **True grace** is a *conditional* grace, and we must accept those conditions and act on them to be truly “connected” (see Titus 2:11–12).

Again, hear the words of the beloved apostle John, also written through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit: *“Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. He who says, ‘I know Him,’ and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him. By this we know that we are in Him. He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked”* (1 John 2:3–6). With this in mind, ask yourself whether or not you are properly “connected” to Jesus. If you are not, then take heart because it is possible for everyone in the whole world to get “connected” to Jesus and to obtain eternal life! That’s why Jesus said to proclaim it to the whole world and to every creature (Mark 16:16)!

Young people today would be horrified if they were not “connected” to all the “social networking.” It is my hope and prayer that you would be just as horrified to know that you do not have “connections” to the “heavenly network.” Please be connected today!

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