

Connected but Alone # 1

2012 09 29, John Fenn, www.supernaturalhousechurch.org

Hi all,

Our son Chris loves to 'help' at the store. I get a cart/buggy and pull it from the front, while Chris in his wheelchair holds onto the handle so that he is pulled along as I pull the cart. Though Chris is 32, having the umbilical cord around his neck during labor and delivery rendered him about a 4 year old mentally. Also, a stroke at age 17 took away the use of his left hand, so he hangs on to the cart and waits for me to stop, where he then helps put groceries into our cart.



Blessed with the blunt honesty of a child, he especially loves making turns because he swings wide as we turn, calling out 'watch out old man' or 'watch out lady', or for those with cowboy hats on, 'watch out cowboy here I come'. (In our part of the world, cowboys are real, and it isn't unusual to see a man or woman in hat, chaps, spurs, in a store) I always have to tell him to say 'excuse me' instead of 'watch out', which he does, but the lesson never sticks, so the next time we repeat the pattern - 'watch out old man'...lol. Living in a small town, most of the cashiers and many customers know us, as I even get asked when going to the store alone, 'Where is your helper today?'

Let me insert here for those who might email me about Chris' healing, that Chris loves the Lord, and has had the Lord speak to him at least 2x that I know of. Chris's faith is such: "When I get to heaven I won't need my wheelchair, I'm going to run" and "Jesus told me (when I get to heaven) He is going to walk through the mountains with me!"

Due to his brain damage, time is a concept lost on Chris. Next week is the same as in 3 days, and 3 days as next week. As a result, we have been unsuccessful in teaching him that he can be healed now, so to him healing isn't something to be desired. He knows Jesus is going to walk with him in the mountains one day, that the Lord loves

trains, and that he won't need a wheelchair when he gets to heaven, and that is enough. The rest is just what it is and he is happy.

Numerous visitations with the Lord have been in our living room with Chris asleep mere steps away. One visitation the Lord was standing on my left while Chris was seated in his wheelchair on my right, just a slight reach for the Lord to touch Chris, but He did not, choosing for whatever reason to meet Chris where Chris' faith is; that when he gets to heaven he won't need a wheelchair.

Check out line

And so it was one day, the day this photo was taken, that we were in the check out line with a woman in front of us who had a small child in the child's seat of the cart.

Our practice is for Chris to be first in the line, then me, then the cart/buggy. I pull items from our cart/buggy and give them to Chris, who then helps by putting them on the belt for the cashier. He is always enthusiastic and the first item that day was a can that he threw onto the belt which then rolled like a cylindrical bowling ball towards the cashier with enough force to get a strike had it been in a bowling alley!

That's when I noticed the lady in front of us, who was texting madly on her smart phone, completely ignoring her 2 year old in the seat and the actions of the cashier, who needed the woman to slide her card to complete the transaction. I looked at her, then to the cashier who was silently staring the customer down with the look of 'Lady, there are people in line so please notice we are all waiting on you!' Her ignored 2 year old was playing with the last couple plastic sacks of items which needed to be loaded into the cart/buggy, and the cashier was keeping an eye on the little girl as well, making sure she didn't grab a sack and empty the contents onto the floor.

I looked behind us, and the 3 other people in line were also staring at the woman, still texting away, caught up in her world. Connected, but alone. Surrounded, but disconnected. Finally the cashier politely said 'Just slide your card please' and the woman returned to planet earth, slid her card and completed the sale, never looking around to connect with her surroundings, never seeing the line, never seeing the rolling eyes and shaking of the head of the cashier.

So this series is about the effects of being connected yet living in a world unconnected from real people, real relationships, real growth and personal development. Many studies have been done and much written about technology's affect on society, but my interest here is Christians and growth in Christ, and how we believers are affected.



Christians, fellowship, and false friendships

Technology allows us to tweet, email, friend, text, instant message, Skype, and connect at will with people all over the world, yet I hear over and over that Christians are among the hardest to get actual face time with. From the business person to church person, actually sitting down together and getting to know one another is as difficult as catching a butterfly with bare hands; You think it has settled on the flower, but just as you get close it flies off to another flower, and you are left standing empty handed and discouraged.

You've probably experienced or observed that people say things via email they would never say if they were face to face with a person. I went to a Tulsa TV station web site recently because they have the best weather radar, and their lead news item was about local Union members wanting to switch Unions to represent them at work. The story included a photo of several men in a room at a meeting.

When I scrolled down to look at the comments, people had emailed in rude comments on the story about the big belly of one man, the rough and dirty look of another, how they looked lazy, and so on.

Shallow people, more shallow as Christians

I get the same type of comments just by the nature of these Weekly Thoughts and my e-newsletter. People who subscribe for a year or two will suddenly get offended at something I say, send off a rude and insulting email to me, and unsubscribe. They may have received 50 or 100 or 200 or more emails from me over the last couple of years, but if I write 1 thing they don't agree with, or they have read something into what I wrote (that I never intended), or the article touches their 'hot' button of where they were hurt in the past, suddenly I get a nasty, hate filled, rude email from them.

Forget the fact their lives have been changed by the other 99 or 199 emails/teachings over the last couple of years - regular emails from me and even emailing back and forth in some cases has allowed a familiarity, yet the distance and anonymity of email allowed them to lob insults and hate without fear of repercussion. Like the people responding to the news story above, you just know if we were face to face they would never say what they wrote in email.

Some Christians are almost willing to do away with real friendships, because the machines seem to be listening to them. The machines never challenge them, make them think, or cause them to face their own heart. Machines are safe, and relationships through those machines are safe. They allow a distance between people lest someone get too close, which might cause me hurt.

Mankind has never been as connected as it is today, yet 25% of Americans have no close friends and the average number of friends for the remaining 75% has dropped from 4 to 2, corresponding with the rise of technology's ability to connect us. (June 2006 American Sociological Review)

The illusion of friendship

Our machines give us the illusion of friendship without the demands of friendship. Our machines give us a false sense of connectivity, a false sense of intimacy. You may see a notice on Facebook, 'I have a cold today', and feel sorry for the person, even lifting a prayer for their quick recovery, and you feel connected to them. A person may tweet that they passed their test today, getting 96%, and you send a quick note of congratulations.

And while that is good as far as it goes, that usually IS as far as it goes. The person who writes a 'Get well soon, praying for you' on Facebook, and tweets 'Congratulations, way to go!', may be living all alone, maybe suicidal, without a church family, without a job or friends, but the connectivity our machines provide give people a false sense of friendship.

As a result in many cases, the more a person connects, the more alone they feel. Like eating a meal while you're still half full from the previous meal, you don't taste the food and don't enjoy it for there is no inner fulfillment. That same emptiness happens when we have no true face to face friends but just a strong network of online friends. **We are lonely but are afraid of intimacy.**

Enter the Lord

Many Christians don't know how to be alone with themselves, and therefore don't know how to be alone with the Lord. They run to the prophet for a word because they don't truly know the Lord because they've not learned how to be alone, and alone with Him. They run to meetings for answers, willingly forgetting and neglecting the fact Christ lives in them and is as close as an investment in time and effort to get to know Him.

Like the woman in the check out line, the moment there was a lull in life, the moment her attention wasn't focused on her daughter or the process of paying for groceries, her mind went to 'connecting' with someone via a text conversation because it is easy, convenient, and non-threatening.



Yet we realize the great people of faith knew how to be alone: Abraham looking at the stars and receiving the revelation he would be the father of a people as numerous as they. Young shepherd David alone in the fields around Bethlehem, communing with the Lord in solitude. Jesus going off by himself into the wilderness or mountain or quiet place where He could be alone to be with the Father in prayer.

Your life counts! How do we develop our walk with the Lord while also being connected electronically to so many? How do we cultivate personal solitude as well as genuine friendships? How do we discover our purpose and what role do relationships have in that? What are other effects of technology on friendships?

That's where I'll pick up next week, until then, blessings,

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Connected but Alone # 2

2012 10 06, John Fenn, www.supernaturalhousechurch.org

Hi all,

This week I have a confession to make. But first let me tell you how I got myself into that situation.

Barb and I were flying out of Billings, Montana in July, making our way to Tulsa via a change of planes in Minneapolis. Barb took the window seat and I got the aisle, and as we got settled a young man in his late twenties took the seat in the row in front of us, directly in front of Barb on the window.

Montana has a lot of ranches and therefore cowboys, and this young man looked the part, except he had a baseball cap instead of cowboy hat on. But if you've been around ranches and cowboys you know that a cap often replaces a cowboy hat when in public away from home - it doesn't scream 'cowboy' if you are in the big city and away from the ranch.



I took stock of our flying companion. He was definitely a real cowboy: Short hair neatly trimmed, baseball cap, round tin of chewing tobacco in his hip pocket, clean and new or newer tight jeans 'boot cut', which means the pants legs flare a bit to be able to fit over his dress cowboy boots. Large silver belt buckle, plaid long sleeve shirt western style even though it was July, and he called the flight attendant ma'am. Yep, the real deal. I wondered why he was going to Minneapolis, but I soon had my answer.

As soon as Cowboy sat down he asked the flight attendant for a beer, which she delivered promptly - while we were still sitting at the gate! Then he began texting, and being right handed, his phone was clearly visible to me in the space between the seats. His thumbs were flying on his Blackberry and he was holding it in such a way that just screamed an invitation for me to eavesdrop on his conversation.

Sorry, Lord

So I did. The first text I saw said 'You always criticize the way I dress. You always criticize me in front of my friends.' The name over the text was something like 'Jenny', and he responded with something like 'No I don't, we'll talk about it when I get there'. I realized I was reading an argument between boy friend and girl friend,

and felt embarrassed but all the more curious at the same time. They weren't using abbreviations and symbols, they were writing out each and every word with full punctuation; it was a real texting conversation, and I was violating their privacy.

I said something to myself like 'You know you shouldn't be reading his texts, but sorry Father, I'll pray for him if that makes it any better' as I chuckled to myself at the instant recognition of the stupidity I just prayed...(enter short prayer for Cowboy and Jenny)...then resumed stolen glances at their conversation.

Cowboy wouldn't let it go, like he was going to adequately explain via text messages why he was critical of his girlfriend's clothing on their last date and why he criticizes her in front of her friends, when he knew he was going to have to turn the phone off in about 5 minutes...



I felt like telling him the first thing you do to get out of a hole is to stop digging! Just apologize, learn that she is feeling insecure about you and her relationship with you, and shut up already or no one will be there to meet you at the airport dude!

But nooooo, he had to respond....so then she brought up how critical he is about things she says, her choice of restaurant they ate at on their last date - and he responded that he was just trying to help her and how she comes across to people - and like a World War I pilot getting shot down in one of those old biplanes, he was going down in flames fast.

Soon I was in his world, my mind whirling for answers, waiting to see how Jenny would next respond. My pulse quickened, I tried to switch my attention to the airline magazine in my lap I was pretending to read, but kept glancing up at his texts...hurry Jenny they're about to close the door!

I briefly toyed with the idea of confessing to him my eavesdropping and offer to give him advice, but thought the better of it. About that time the door of the plane shut, all electronic devices were turned off and stowed, seat backs were in their upright position, we learned for the umpteenth time how a seat belt buckles and unbuckles, and off we flew.

Another beer ma'am

As soon as he could turn his phone back on, airplane mode I assume, he did, reading and re-reading the text conversation with Jenny though unable to transmit or receive, and going through 3 more beers in the process. As soon as we landed the phone was back on normal mode, and the texting began again. I prayed more earnestly and honestly this time for him, because I figured with 4 beers on the plane and Jenny waiting curbside and the text conversation they'd had 2 hours earlier, he needed prayer!

Vicarious living

My sin of eavesdropping on Cowboy and Jenny allowed me to live vicariously through them. Vicarious is defined as "Living as if through someone else, not experiencing it yourself, but using someone else's experiences as your own."

Through them I was able to relive past arguments Barb and I had when we were in our 20's, when I was just learning to stop digging when I argued myself into a hole...(alas, I'm still learning that one) by reading their texts I was back in time to when our sons were children.

I connect, therefore I am

People have lived vicariously ever since Adam and Eve sat around the dinner table telling their kids what it used to be like in the Garden of Eden. It isn't necessarily a sin (though like any God-given gift, it can be used to sin); in fact it is a God-given part of our imagination. Books, movies, TV, radio, the Internet and more, tap into our imagination and people live vicariously to some degree as part of entertainment.

But today, with so many ways to connect to people, many have taken those once-in-a-while vicarious moments and turned them into a lifestyle. As a result their life is 'out there' in cyberspace, while neglecting people close to them. Some are so 'out there' they have forgotten who they are, what their real priorities should be, and have even lost social skills with real people.

Experiencing God vicariously

In a few years we have gone from only living vicariously for 2 hours on Saturday at the matinee movie to vicarious living as a lifestyle, involved in peoples' lives through social web sites, 'friends', tweets, and more. Our emotions flow just like a real relationship, though we can keep 'friends' at a distance. We feel what they feel, we worry and pray, we rejoice with our virtual friends. We are living vicariously through them.

We then go to church and expect to experience God vicariously - through the worship, the preaching or teaching, the overall experience. Sadly though, most experience church rather than experience God, which is the result of being in 'vicarious' mode. Their relationship with the Lord becomes hollow and they don't know why. Church is boring, they don't know how to connect in worship, the Word, they don't feel His presence.

You can't experience nor know God vicariously

Their walk with God has the same shallowness as their relationship with their Facebook friends and for the same reasons: Relationships work best in person. To say it another way, you can't truly know a person (or God) if you only experience them vicariously.

So people search out the prophet for a word, the meeting where angels are being seen, the holy goose bumps and more, all to experience something real in their faith life. Christians you think are solid suddenly wonder if God is real -



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all because their faith has been a vicarious one, not genuinely knowing the Lord. They've lived their faith life through the eyes and ears and experiences of others instead of truly knowing the Lord and the Father themselves.

And that's where I'll pick it up next week...for my house church friends this should prove to be a good study and discussion for this week if you should choose this topic. Until then, blessings,

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Connected but Alone # 3

2012 10 13, John Fenn, www.supernaturalhousechurch.org

Hi all,

Chris and I were at the store picking up a few items, and though we were headed to the food department, we always stop by the toys to look at the cars and trucks. He loves all things car and truck, from the characters of the 'Cars' movies - Lightning McQueen and Tow Mater - to Herbie the Love Bug to whatever strikes his fancy that day. Easiest to handle and therefore his favorite are the 'Matchbox' cars - those little metal cars of all makes and models - some modeled after real cars, some imaginary.

Normally Chris' attention is focused on whatever is within arm's reach, but on this day he saw the display of 'Matchbox' cars from way off; "Look dad, look! Look at the cars!" As you can see from the picture, if you count the rows there are 72 cars on display, with more cars behind each of the ones in the front.

He quickly and forcefully rolled up to the display and started putting cars in the basket so fast that I started laughing at his pure glee, and took the picture. He would grab one, carefully examine it, then say 'I want this one' as he dropped it in the basket and returned his attention to the next car on display.

He loves those moments when he is totally in charge such as these, so we allow some freedom in the store, and that's how he ended up with 2 new cars that he picked out that day!

Though he lived at home for his first 24 years and had say in what he wanted to do and when, the move to the group home 8 years ago meant giving up a lot of control in his life. With 7 other people living in the home and 2 aides, life for him has become a matter of doing what the group is doing, and much of that is unchangeable routine.

The bus to the workshop leaves at 8:30am, someone wheels him onto the bus lift, he does what is set before him at workshop, returns to the home about 3:30pm, has a snack, dinner about 5:30, bed around 8pm, medicine is given at 8am, 12, 8pm/20:00 every day, and so on, all at the direction of others.

By contrast, when I pick him up to come home for the 2 days and 1 night each week when we are in town, my first question to him is 'What do you want to do?' Because I get him at 8:30am when the others are headed to workshop, his normal reply varies: "Hmmm, donuts I think" or "Let's go to McDonalds" as he loves the #9 breakfast burritos with a carton of milk.

Then we may park near an intersection or by the train tracks as the Lord nearly always seems to arrange for a train to come because "Jesus just loves trains", and then we begin our 'errands with dad'. Our errands usually take until about 3pm, some at his direction, and that's why we were at the store the day this picture was taken.

Instant control, instant communication

Our lives are not unlike Chris' in that most of the time we live according to what the group is doing. From the time we awaken the expectations of others are upon us. We rise, eat, and go to work or school to be somewhere at a set time, with tasks set before us by day, week, and month.

But when the end of the day comes we have many choices before us like the display of 72 cars at the store: What shall I choose?

For many, the first thought is to 'connect' online in one or more social groups. This age of instant communication allows us to be fully in control of our lives, or at least provide the illusion it is so. We can put our attention wherever we want it to be: Let me see who is on Facebook Messenger right now. What are people saying on the groups I'm in? Maybe I need to check the farm in Farmville. Let me open Skype to see who is online I can call or instant message...

Of all the choices to make, rarely do we choose 'nothing'. 'Nothing' isn't on display grabbing our attention. Today,

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being alone is often a result of not connecting rather than a choice we make to be alone.

A problem to be solved

Being alone feels like a problem to be solved not something to be desired. We have so many choices we don't know what to do with ourselves.

If you don't learn how to be alone, you will be lonely.

Having people around you, electronically or real, isn't a cure for loneliness. Loneliness is defined as: An unpleasant feeling in which a person feels a strong sense of emptiness.

But that emptiness can't be totally filled by 'net friends because though righteousness comes through knowing Christ, it is unproven all by itself. God designed that righteousness is proven within personal and close relationships. Cyber-only relationships therefore don't by themselves, allow us to prove and walk out our righteousness.

Here is the difficulty: Technology appeals to us where we are most vulnerable. Picking up from last week, living vicariously through those in our online social network means if our weakness is genuine friendships or loneliness, we can become over balanced towards 'connecting' as soon as our time is our own.

When I was growing up 'electronics' meant a radio or the 4 channels on the TV. We had to spend time with ourselves, it wasn't a discipline, it wasn't something we had to schedule. **We** were the entertainment so we knew ourselves. We knew what it was like to be alone and play by ourselves.

The first clue for many that things were changing was a popular 1970's TV commercial whose line was: 'Calgon take me away' as the viewer saw a woman taking a leisurely bubble bath as the troubles of the day melted away. 'Me time' now had to be scheduled. (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MVLzkTuVmrw> for you youngsters :)

When we choose to be constantly (electronically) connected we think we aren't alone - the social networks provide the illusion of meaningful relationships, but are in fact 'inadequate', and that's why the more some connect to social networks the more alone they feel. It is counter-intuitive; the more we are connected in social media the more we feel lonely.

Feel like yourself?

If we don't know how to be alone we don't feel like ourselves if we aren't connected. We feel like something is wrong, out of sorts. We turn to others to feel less anxious or to feel alive, which means **we are using them for our gratification, for our own selfish ego and purposes to support our fragile selves.**

We must learn to be alone, to use social networks to bless others rather than a means of self-gratification to support our fragile ego. But how do you learn to be alone?

Finding the wavelength

What were you doing the last time you felt the Lord's presence? What were you doing the last time you know for sure He showed you something or spoke to you? Was it while studying the Word? Were you taking a walk, riding a bike, driving aimlessly, riding the bus, taking a long bubble bath?

Now look for patterns through the years, connect the dots to those times you received revelation or felt His presence or know that He spoke to you - do you see that during those times you were in a certain frame of mind, a sort of 'wavelength'. Like the old radios where you'd have to move the dial back and forth to tune in to the strongest signal, look for the patterns of where and how He has communicated to you in the past and return to that 'wavelength'.

Set aside 'me' time and don't feel guilty about it. Separate yourself from your devices - off or silent and in another room - and get yourself into the mental place where you've had the Lord communicate/reveal to you in the past...and know yourself...which is where we'll pick it up next week. Until then, blessings,

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Connected but Alone # 4

2012 10 20, John Fenn, www.supernaturalhousechurch.org

Hi all,

The young man was very nervous as I directed him to a seat on the sofa in my office. I was the Director of a Bible school and he a student, so I thought he was nervous about being in my office. He was about 18

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and I remembered that he sat near the front to my left and was always paying attention and writing notes.

Doubt

"I'm sorry for bothering you, but I'm in your classes and you seem like you'll tell me the truth, and I don't want to sound stupid or anything, but I really want to know: Is any of this real?"

I was confused: "What do you mean, 'Is any of this real?'" Suddenly the depth of his question hit me as the reason for his nervousness became clear - he was questioning the reality of God.

He continued: "You know, all of this. Is God real or is church just a show, a performance to stir up emotion and make people feel good? I just don't know anymore. I mean, I accepted the Lord when I was in junior high at our youth group and I really experienced something, and thought He was real. But now, I'm not sure."

I asked why he wondered and he said he didn't feel God anymore. He was very busy with school from 8 until noon, and volunteered in children's church on Sunday and 1 Saturday a month worked the puppets for the church's outreach to children in poorer apartment complexes. He also had a job, studies, and social activities. But he no longer felt God's presence inside.

Busy-ness doesn't equal Godliness

I was visiting a missionary in Mexico back in 1986 and one evening he handed me a piece of paper with about 20 names written on it: "You're a prophet, would you pray over these names because each one is a person who said they want to come work with us, but I don't know most of them and I need to know the Lord's will." I replied that he needed to spend time in prayer and interviewing these people, not have me get a word from the Lord on it. His reply: I'm too busy doing the work of the ministry to pray."

He was like the Bible student: Too busy doing Christian things to actually know God.

(The Father was gracious. I went back to my room and told the Father I was there as a guest, so under the missionary's authority, so had little choice in the matter though I didn't agree with it, and if He would indulge me by giving me a word about each person and their involvement yes/no with the missionary I'd appreciate it, which He did, which the missionary said he really appreciated and helped fill in the blanks on some things he had felt he had gotten from the Lord.)

Many of us are as busy as the missionary or the student, then when you add all our devices which connect us to the rest of the world, it is no wonder Christians can get more wrapped up in the production of church more than knowing the Lord church is supposed to be about.

TMI

American Internet users spend 23% of online time in social networking sites, 62% of adults world-wide now use social media, and 56% of social media users have admitted to using it to spy on their partners.

The average US teenager sends/receives 3,339 texts per month (111 per day). In 2009 there were 1.5 trillion texts sent/received in the year, in 2011 that had jumped to over 7 trillion. (7,000,000,000,000) (mashable.com, dhatech.com, thesocialskinny.com)

There are some positives to being connected of course - it provides a distraction, a break in routine, we catch up on news, and opens us to new possibilities. The down side is that it can become addictive and people tend to share Too Much Information (tmi if you know the language of texting, lol).

Being too connected can be narcissistic - Narcissism defined as excessive self-love, inflated sense of self-importance and unjustified feelings of entitlement. Too many 'friends' may mean you are spending too much time on social sites and it makes people feel more comfortable with online relationships than face to face relationships, thus making thousands of friends actually mean 'none'.

And of course social networks have their share of weirdos and complainers, but the biggest reason to use them in balance is that social networks prevent people from being social and networking.

God is a Spirit

Jesus said "God is a Spirit, and those that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth." (John 4:24)

The word 'must' here is not a demand or requirement like 'You must do your homework before you go to the game' or 'You must complete this report before you leave today'. It can mean all these things in scripture, but in this context



'must' is more of a road map instructing us on how to fellowship with the Father.

As in, 'When you're coming into town on that road you must pass the big library before you reach our street.' Or, 'To get food to your stomach it must pass through your mouth and esophagus first'.

So when Jesus said true worshippers must worship the Father in spirit and truth, He was providing a road map: To be able to worship the Father you must do so out of your spirit and out of a motive of truth. The 'entering of the gates' so to speak, must be accomplished out of the spirit.

The word 'worship' is 'proskuneo', one of my favorite words in the whole universe, made of 'pros' which means 'towards', and 'kuneo' which means 'to kiss'. Literally then, worship is the kissing towards the Father out of your spirit, your innermost being, and in truth - pure motives of love (not trying to remind him you have an urgent prayer request or trying to manipulate Him as if you can praise Him enough to motivate Him to answer your request).

Oh, so that's why the empty feeling!

Our physical bodies can only touch the physical world. Our minds can only touch the mental world. Your body can't leap into the pages of a book anymore than your mind can drive the car outside. But get your mind and body together and then you can open a book and go places mentally or get into the car and drive it where you desire.

When we sit in front of a computer to connect socially, we are using our mind and body to do so. Our spirit man is not involved...stay with me here I'm speaking in broad generalities...GENERALLY speaking, it is our soul and body that is involved, not our spirit.

But God is a Spirit...we can't touch Him physically and He isn't a mind that we have union with Him in the space between our ears. The road map to fellowship with Him is as Jesus said: Our spirit.

Your spirit is the innermost you. It is in your spirit questions arise which flow into your mind like 'Who am I?', 'Why am I here?', 'What is my purpose?' Your spirit is where God lives in you and when you hear His voice, it is in your spirit. Your spirit and your soul (soul includes your mind) are eternally connected, for your soul actually proceeds from your spirit and is what makes you, you. People in heaven are now spirit and soul, lacking a physical body, yet your spirit and soul look like you - because they are the real you.

As we renew our minds to learn to think like God it is the process of the Life in your spirit flowing to your thoughts to change them. That requires effort and an act of your will. Spirit and soul are housed in an earth-suit, a body.

One day we'll get a new body made of heavenly material such as Jesus has now, but for now we're stuck on planet earth in a body that has an expiration date. Only a blessed few know the season of their expiration date, for the rest of us, we just keep breathing and putting one foot in front of the other.

People try to fill the emptiness in their spirit with mental and physical things, but because physical can only touch physical and mental can only touch mental, their spirit man remains untouched. That is why surrounding oneself with 'things' in the physical realm proves empty. It is why no amount of education, drink, drugs, or money can fill the emptiness inside. It is why sex for the sake of sex alone can't touch the emptiness inside. And it is why too much focus on being 'connected' in social networks makes for a shallow and hollow Christian life. All these 'things' only touch the soul or body, not the spirit.

Reconnecting

I asked the young man in my office to remember when he last felt the presence of the Lord. He recalled a time at his home church before life got so busy, when he was just sitting (body) during the worship and his thoughts (soul) were focused not on talking to the Lord but rather more in neutral, then slowly his attention turned inward, away from the music inwardly to what was happening in him...(to his spirit), and there he felt peace, an overwhelming love...and he recalled sitting there for an unknown amount of time, unaware of anything but the love and Presence in his spirit....

And that is the subject for next week, for I don't want to present a problem like too much Internet social networking, without present the solution - Next week: How to experience His presence...until then, blessings, John

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