

*For with You is the fountain of life; in Your light we see light.*

*Psalm 36:9*

# *the* LifeWord *—*

*with Michael Green*



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Dear Friend:

## **TWO-FACED BOOK**

In a recent tour of the Face Book/MySpace sociology experiments, I found them to be destinations where kids and some adults, in the 21st Century version of the old party lines, share pictures of their kids, dogs and vacations, tell what they had for breakfast, rant about their interests or discuss their "signs". Some pages are elaborate, innocent and fun loving while some seem to use it as an opportunity to develop new personas in this synthetic orbit.

I guess the big deal is to list all your friends and to see who has the bigger list of "friends". While it is apparent some are just Eleanor Rigby lonely, for the vast group of "Nosey Rosie's" in TV Land, it's a veritable buffet feast of information and gossip fodder. A "grownup" perusing a teen's page for info tends to sound a bit creepy.

And what about the colossal waste of time and energy? God bless 'em if it floats their boat, but I'm wondering, "How does anyone find enough time to keep up with all of this stuff?" And, "Aren't some of you a bit too old to be on some 15 year olds' buddy list?" Whatever the answer, I did learn a few interesting things.

Connecting people is no longer subject to the old "Six Degrees of Separation" theory, its only 2 or 3 clicks away and as a bonus, you get a quick tutorial on who folks wish to identify as their friends.

I scrolled down one list and a familiar face popped up. The dear one in question had a proven monkey wrench ministry mixed with a legendary gift of gossip which made the next few moments tragically interesting. With the next click, we were introduced to the "friends".

That click was a Technicolor Testimony further confirming my hypothesis of who was connected. Bad memories facilitated the remembrance of heartache courtesy the members of the bitter network who grinned back from the screen. Definitely a Hall of Fame gaggle of codependents.

What a fellowship, what a big fat joy divine!

I know some might be innocent or clueless but some obviously feel comfortable in a bizarre fraternity that gets emboldened by keeping the spotlight off of their own life mess. A haven of rust.

Further in, I also got introduced to a cadre of hard partying Christian youth celebrating their Christian liberty while swilling a few long necks in the process. Enlightening.

Jesus said, "By the fruit they produce, you'll know what sort of tree they are hooked into." Solomon said, "Bad manners corrupt good character". We've always heard, "Be careful how you pick your friends". In this case, "Your friends will tell us a lot about you!"

To the good folks who might use these forums to get in touch with old flames, classmates, fellow poodle owners or old Glee Club buddies, proceed and be blessed. Keep it fun and stay above the gossip glibness. I've also been made well aware that some folks might use this stuff to promote their ministry group to which I say, "Have at it!"

But, the preponderance of the electronic excrement on my screen took the fun out of it. Additionally, we now have twitter twits to deal with... "I just ate a hamburger" or "The sky is so-o-o blue today, Awesome!" Important stuff.

We really need to be thoughtful about those we want to identify as our friends and our fellowship network as we walk this planet. The choice is critical, especially in these troubled times. These choices can help raise us up or they can facilitate our downfall. In the selection process, we need Holy Spirit discernment. To survive this world, we need to surround ourselves with those who will walk in faith, encouragement and truthfulness.

Furthermore, if you don't know what to do with your extra time, try volunteering for a place of Kingdom service. Leave the smiley faces, favorite band and movie chats and the networking to the kids. If you were born before the 80's, it might be healthier to find some friends in your age group or just get a puppy. C'mon big kids, I know you can do it!

As far as real friends are concerned, I didn't see many faces on that list that I would even think of sharing a personal need or vision with and that is sad. If Hymnologist, Fanny Crosby were alive today, her posted front page mantra would likely be her famous, powerful words, "What a Friend we have in Jesus, all our sins and griefs to bear". That's a good reminder and you'll never be ashamed to let the world know that HE is your Friend of Friends! He is that faithful loving Friend, who will rejoice in your successes, stand with you in the tough times and not sell you down the river.

*Michael*

*The*  
**LifeGate**