

Practicing to Think Christianly

Start with Prayer asking for wisdom and understanding.

S – Source

1. What is being said?
 - * What is actually being said? State it in your own words
 - * What is this claim or idea trying to get me to do or believe?
 - * Is it fact, opinion, preference or interpretation?
2. Who is Saying it?
 - * What is the source of the claim or idea?
 - * What is their bias or presuppositions that could influence this claim or idea?

T – Truth & Consequences

1. What is the Evidence
 - * Is there evidence or support for the claim?
 - * Can you detect any fallacies in the claim?
 - * Is the evidence trustworthy?
2. What Biblical truths and principles apply?
 - * What are the logical consequences to this claim or idea?
 - * Is there direct Biblical support or contradiction for the claim and its logical conclusions?
 - * Does this claim contradict clear biblical principles?
 - * How does this fit in with God's character, God's Law, or God's Actions

O – Other Sources

1. Do other Reliable sources agree?
 - * Can I find independent sources I trust to confirm the claim or idea?
 - * What do people I respect think (parents, pastors, teachers, peers)
2. What might be missing?
 - * What questions do you have as you think through this idea or claim?
 - * What might have been left out? Why?

P – Pause & Pray

1. How is my perspective influenced?
 - * Am I being influenced by emotions, pressure, or bias?
 - * Does this confirm something or contradict something I already strongly believe?
2. How Confident am I?
 - * From what I have read, how certain am I?
 - * Should I say, "I don't know yet"?
 - * How does this issue impact my Christian walk?

Since a few weeks ago, I've noticed Meta's persistent advertising on my LinkedIn profile, proudly announcing their new Instagram "teen accounts," supposedly equipped with safety measures to allow kids to access their platform "safely."

Setting aside the irony that these ads target users without teenagers, what truly alarms me is how we, as a society, have come to accept that our children—the people most dear to us—are allowed on platforms proven by research to cause them harm. The very existence of these "safety measures" raises the question: if these platforms are safe, why do they need added layers of protection in the first place?

In a world where technology shapes nearly every aspect of our lives, social media has become one of the most powerful forces influencing young minds. Yet, with great power comes profound risk—especially for teenagers at a pivotal stage of psychological and emotional development.

As a parent and a futurist deeply engaged with emerging technologies, I worry about the long-term impact of social media and AI platforms on the younger generation. We've seen how these platforms, driven by relentless competition and short-term profit motives, manipulate attention, cultivate addictive behaviors, and expose users to a steady stream of misinformation and unrealistic portrayals of reality.

This digital era has undoubtedly brought unparalleled access to information. Yet, it has also left teens vulnerable to a barrage of content—and to online bullying by peers—that they may not be prepared to navigate or confront.

Teens should be banned from social media because the potential harm to their mental health and development is too significant to ignore. Social media has become nearly universal among teenagers: about 90% of U.S. teens use YouTube, while 63% use TikTok, 61% use Instagram, and 55% use Snapchat. Even more concerning, 36% of teens report using at least one major social-media platform *almost constantly*.

The effects aren't simply theoretical. In a 2024 Pew Research survey, about 1 in 5 teens said social media hurts their mental health, while 39% said social media makes them feel overwhelmed by drama, 31% said it creates pressure to post popular content, and 27% said it makes them feel worse about their own lives. In addition, 45% of teens said they spend too much time on social media—a substantial increase from 27% in 2023.

The U.S. Surgeon General has also warned that we cannot conclude that social media is sufficiently safe for children and adolescents. With teenagers still developing emotionally and socially, society should take a precautionary approach rather than waiting for more evidence of harm.

Social media can certainly provide benefits, including connection, creativity, entertainment, and access to information. But if a product is being used almost constantly by young people and a significant number report that it negatively affects their well-being, it is reasonable to ask whether those benefits outweigh the risks. Until teens are old enough to manage those risks responsibly, banning social media for minors could be an appropriate way to protect their mental health and development.