

**Vomit Status:
“Available,” “Limited,” or “No, Thank You”**

**what to do when someone spews
in the world of social media**

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Natalie Harness, Carol Johnson, and Jenna Curley for their help with this booklet

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Vomit Status: “Available,” “Limited,” or “No, Thank You”

what to do when someone spews in the world of social media

Vomit: it’s definitely an attention-getter, and yet it really pictures what we do when we have words unacceptable to God, whether spoken, typed, or posted. You might be on *Facebook*, *Myspace*, or a social media site where you have a “status” such as *available* or *limited*. Imagine with me that you are with someone who had actually become sick and vomited on you in the past, and the next time you are with them, they suddenly act like they are coming down with the same sickness. What would you do? What would your “status” be? Would you stand still and say, “Sure, I’m available to be vomited on,” or maybe “I’ll just take a limited amount of vomit.” More than likely your “status” would be “No, thank you,” and you would move out of the way as quickly as possible! I’m not really excited about having vomit on me either, yet conversations on social media today can be just as repulsive to our Savior and Lord. Are you often *available* for those

who want to spew their “vomit conversation” on you? Maybe you just accept a *limited* amount of “vomit talk.” Friend, God cares about the words we speak and others’ words we read, so we should too.

The Bible says In Proverbs 26:11, “*As a dog returneth to his vomit, so a fool returneth to his folly.*” We are much smarter than dogs, or at least we ought to be, with what we do, where we go, what we listen to, and what we look at. What should you do when people wind up and spew evil out of their mouths? It may not be face-to-face, but rather on a computer screen, tablet, or phone. This happens all the time, and for some reason even Bible-believing Christians just let that puke go all over them. It seems like the obvious thing to do when someone vomits towards you is to get out of the way. What do you do? You better move when somebody spews! You don’t want to just stand there and have that garbage contaminate you. Words will affect you, just like physical puke will affect you. Other people’s conversation can affect your life, your spirit, and your outlook, just as if someone was vomiting on you. Words like “vomit, throwing up, spewing, and barfing” are all words we really don’t want to think about, yet that’s equivalent to some of the social media conversations many read or participate in.

Notice these numbers in social media:

- 2.2 billion email users world-wide
- 144 billion emails daily
- 2.4 billion internet users world-wide
- 1 billion monthly active users on *Facebook*
- 1.1 billion *Facebook* accounts open today (*There are about 9 billion people in the world today.*)
- 47 percent of *Facebook* users are female, the rest are corporations and men
- average age of those on *Facebook* is 40.5
- 2.7 billion “likes” on *Facebook* every day
- 4 billion people now text by phone

Sources: www.royal.pingdom.com/2013/01/16/internet-2012-in-numbers

www.guardian.co.uk/technology/2012/may/06/sms-text-messages-20th-birthday

Now *Facebook* of itself is not an evil thing; like many things, it can be used for good, or it can be used for evil. The church uses *Facebook* to promote meetings and let people know what is going on in the church in a positive way. 200 million people are using *Twitter* these days, and it, too, can be used for good or bad. 4 billion people today text on their phones—that's almost half the world. Do you think that all those texts going out are wholesome, right, and good for you to read? Satan wants to see you fall, and he may use social media to accomplish this.

Accept a message from David's life. At one point David was hated so much that he hid in caves, yet here's what David said: "*Let not an evil speaker be established in the earth: evil shall hunt the violent man to overthrow him.*" (Psalm 140:11) Notice what he says in the beginning: "*Let not an evil speaker be established in the earth.*" What do I do, and what *should* I do when someone spews evil speaking all over me? Well, to put it simply, you better move when somebody spews. Don't give an audience. If someone is going to send evil speaking to you, unsubscribe or un-follow them; take them off of your account in a kind, Christ-like manner, and let them know that you are not interested in the conversation they are sending or posting.

There are four different ways that people will vomit on you: roller coaster puke, exercise puke,

poison puke, and blood pressure puke. Sound odd? Keep reading.

Roller Coaster Puke

When somebody gets on a roller coaster, they go up and down and up and down, and their stomach gets queasy. It looked like fun, but suddenly they are not really excited about the roller coaster anymore. Some people constantly ride an emotional roller coaster. Their emotions are never consistent, and they may invite you to join them on this ride. They will puke their self-pity and ungodly attitude all over you, but you don't have to accept it. You don't have to go up and down with people as they focus on only themselves or accept the stress that goes with reading their thoughts on social media.

Unfortunately, people like this want their friends to join them in their faulty thinking – one day happy, the next upset...up and down, up and down. I have heard of people “unfriending” people because they didn't say “hi” to them or fights in the home because one person “friended” another. The stories continue...people “unfriending” people because they didn't give them a gift and then “friending” them again when they want something or are given a gift. You don't have to ride such emotional roller coasters and allow this puke to contaminate you.

Exercise Puke

The second kind of vomit that you may encounter is exercise puke. Exercise puke comes from busybodies constantly active in other people's business. I remember when I tried out for the high school basketball team in ninth grade. My mother, being a good mom, liked to feed me good food, but for some reason before these tryouts, she gave me some food to eat. Now at tryouts you don't really play much basketball; you run a lot and you move on your feet. We ran and did "suicides," where you run to one end of the court, then to the other side, then to the free throw line, then back to the middle. So I had something to eat before all this, and let's just say it really didn't work out well for me at all. Busybodies are famous for "vomit talk."

Busybodies, those who gossip or those who are always nosing into others' business for all the wrong reasons, are an exasperated people who will tend to want to spew their newest juicy tidbit on you. You'd better move when they spew! You do not have to accept their sin. It is one thing to bear somebody's burden, but it's another thing to accept gossip. If someone is sincerely looking for help, you should absolutely bear their burden and pray with them and give them godly counsel, but if they are

just complaining, criticizing, or gossiping, you may want to move out of the way of this vomit.

Poison Puke

Thirdly, you may encounter poison puke. This kind of puke is dangerous, for it can spread a deadly poison. The human stomach wants to hurl poison out of the body as soon as possible. A person may have someone tell them false information or information that is simply not beneficial to anyone, often comments about other Christians. The person being “poisoned” starts to believe what was told to them and feels it is his duty to tell everyone what is wrong with that person being talked about, therefore spreading the poison. These faulty comments can be poison puke when sent your way. Many of these thoughts are on blogs, even “Christian” blogs, and yet are full of wrong thinking. It’s easy to be poisoned by a wrong perspective. No one intentionally wants to be poisoned, so stay away from reading these blogs and harmful comments from so-called “friends.”

Blood Pressure Puke

The last kind to be mentioned is blood pressure puke. This vomit comes up when the body is under

great stress, such as an angry or bitter person, or someone who always seems upset at something. Many times they let their tongue, their text, or their typing become a way to vent and spew all over whoever is willing to stand there and take it. Unfortunately, just like a virus, once you are contaminated with the vomit, oftentimes the one puked on will eventually begin doing the same. After listening to an easily offended person for so long, it's easy to chime in and begin thinking faultily just like them. From David's story, he advised not to give them an audience. You'd better move when someone spews.

II Peter 2:20, it says, *“For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire.”* As Christians who have accepted Christ's salvation, we've been cleansed from our sin and washed by the blood of Jesus Christ, so why would we go back to sinful thinking as a dog

would its vomit? Why would we go back to allowing sinful thoughts to be spewed all over us? In the above verses, we read that we have escaped the pollutions of the world, so why would we go back?

We are accountable for what we look at, who we listen to, the people we follow on *Twitter*, and who we allow to influence us. We need to be cautiously careful as we make choices in today's era of social media.

A woman was interviewed by reporters on her 102nd birthday. When asked about the benefits of living past the century mark, she answered, "No peer pressure!"

Source: 1001 Quotes, Illustrations, and Humorous Stories for Preachers, Teachers, and Writers, Edward K. Rowell

1

FREEDOM TO SPEAK

In America, we talk much about freedom and the freedom of speech. Many people misunderstand what it is to be an American, and what it is to be free in America. We have freedom as Americans to be free as long as we do not violate another person's rights. For example, I'm not going to shoot this person or I'm not going to steal from this person because that would be violating his rights.

Then there's Bible freedom. (By the way, American freedom in its right sense is based on what the Bible teaches, Biblical freedom.) You are free to do the right thing. You don't have to say evil things; you don't have to do the wrong thing. You are free to do right.

In Proverbs 6:12, the Bible says "*A naughty person, a wicked man, walketh with a froward mouth.*" Hopefully you don't want to be a naughty person or a wicked man. The verse says they walk with a froward mouth, a perverse mouth that just speaks evil, wrong, negative things. In Romans 6:1-2, the Bible says, "*What shall we say then? Shall we continue in*

sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?"
Verse two says "God forbid" because we are new creatures in Jesus Christ.

The April 29, 1992 issue of the *Chicago Tribune* reported: "A stripped gear in the propeller controls of a commuter plane caused it to nosedive into the Georgia woods last April, killing former U.S. Senator John Tower of Texas and twenty-two others, the government concluded Tuesday. A gear that adjusted the pitch of the left engine's propellers was slowly worn away by an opposing part with a harder titanium coating, the National Transportation Safety Board said. "It acted like a file, and over time it wore down the teeth that controlled the propeller," said acting board chairman Susan Coughlin."

Just as the titanium gear wore away the gear that it was closest too, one harsh spouse or friend can wear down the spirit of the other.

Source: Today's Best Illustrations, Vol. 2, Elesha Hodge

2

FREEDOM TO SPEW

Yes, in America you have freedom to say what you want to say. You have freedom to spew. But a Christian should bless with good words. In Psalm 34:13, 14 the Bible says, *“Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile. Depart from evil, and do good; seek peace, and pursue it.”*

Are you not encouraged when someone says something positive to you? Those “That-a-boy!’s” are an encouragement to us. Someone saying wholesome words instead of evil is a blessing. You can bless other people with uplifting words, or you can be like a curse to somebody and just spew critical, unkind words or talk about topics that hinder the work of Christ. Sure, as an American you are free to make that choice, but as a believer, you are free to do right.

What about cursing with bad words? How about vomit talk? The vomit talk previously described is a reproach to Jesus Christ. Believers should not engage in a discussion on a device if it is not pleasing to Christ. Maybe you have listened or looked at

someone's gossip or critical, sinful attitude on your phone or device. Stay away from those influences, and certainly do not spread the vomit by repeating things to others. Unkind words expressed about anyone or to anyone is a shame to the gospel of Jesus Christ. We need to do things that edify and build up believers, things that exalt the glory of Jesus Christ in the glorious gospel of Jesus Christ. Vomit conversation, whether typing or *Facebook-ing*, is a mark against Christianity, because everyone who looks at your evil posts thinks, "that person goes to church, and that person says they're a Christian, and yet they are spewing all over me." Even many non-Christians recognize the disgusting attitude often exhibited by Christians: that's a reproach to the name of Jesus Christ, and we as Christians need to be aware of the eternal impact we can have on the unbelievers and young believers in Christ. Determine to be a person who blesses with good words.

So then what should I do in order to not vomit on other people?

SELF-EXAMINE

The very first thing is self-examination. In Matthew 7:1,2 the Bible says, "*Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it*

shall be measured to you again.” Before you post, before you type, and before you speak, ask yourself some personal questions. “Am I the final authority on this?” When we self-examine in the light of God’s Word, we usually find that we are not the final authority. “Am I right with God – no sin between me and the Lord, or am I just looking for others’ wrongs?” Sin can skew our views. “Is this just a personal preference of mine?” Not everyone has the same preferences as you; God did not make us all alike for a reason – what a dull earth that would be. “Is this a personality conflict – they simply do not think the same way as me?” One can spew his “vomit talk” about the boss at the workplace or the teacher at school, even the Sunday school teacher, the preacher, or the church, but he doesn’t know all the background or reasoning behind the decisions being made; maybe those people absolutely cannot tell him all the details for various reasons.

The Bible tells us in Romans 12:18, *“If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.”* So if I’m going to put something on a post or page to hurt someone or to get their attention in the wrong way, or if I’m going to spew and let everyone know what I think about another person, is that going to help me live peaceably with all men? Is typing this going to help my relationship with that person? Will it help other believers in Christ?

In Titus 1:15 the Bible says, *“Unto the pure all things are pure: but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled.”* Anyone can point out someone’s sin by putting it on *Facebook, Twitter*, or emails and tell everybody all about it, but is that being right with God? Many times we jump to the wrong conclusions. To the pure all things are pure, but to the defiled all things are defiled. Let the truth of this verse, Titus 1:15, sink in. I see it happen in church, I see it happen in families, and I see it happen in relationships when people jump to negative conclusions.

We need to be thinking right. “Am I angry or heated?” “Am I really upset and worked up about this?” If so, it’s good to calm down before you post it, because once you post it, you cannot take it back. Somebody will see it, that text will go through, that phone call will still be made, that message will still be there. The damage is done. Make sure you are calm and think it through. In

1. *Am I the final authority on what I am about to say?*

2. *Am I right with God, or looking for others’ wrongs?*

3. *Is this a personal preference or a personality difference?*

4. *Am I angry or heated?*

Ecclesiastes 5:2, the Bible says *“Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter any thing before God: for God is in heaven, and thou upon earth: therefore let thy words be few.”* A lot of things are better left unsaid, especially if you are angry.

FOCUS ON CHRIST

Avoid vomiting on others by having a Savior outlook. How do you do that? Focus on Jesus Christ. *“Will what I say encourage the gospel or discourage it? If I say this, will it put a reproach on why people should be born again, because if I am born again and am saying this garbage, then the lost people seeing it may say, ‘well, they are no different than I am –they say the same hurtful things I say about other people.’”* And that is a reproach to the gospel.

The Bible tells us in Philippians 1:27, *“Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel;”* People need to know that we are striving together for the cause of Christ, not fighting with each other. When we use words displeasing to Christ, it’s a reproach to the testimony of the church and the work of God. These words can hurt a church or a family. If you post something about your

husband or wife, you are just tearing down your household. You can tear down your church or your school, but you are just tearing down your character and your reputation in front of all those people.

Ask yourself: “Will what I text help a believer or put down a believer, will it build them up or put them down, will it help them think right about a situation or will it hinder them, causing them to think wrong about something? Will the bride of Christ, the church, be cast in a good light or a bad light?” That’s us Christians – we are the bride of Christ, and yet some of us are making the church look filthy, spewing disgusting garbage out. Christ doesn’t want this. It’s a shame to Christianity when believers think, “well, it’s just a computer screen”, and yet they would never say those things straight to the face of the person they are talking to or about. People

look at what you type, what you say, and what you post.

1. *Will what I say encourage the Gospel or discourage it?*

2. *Will this help a believer or put him down?*

3. *Will the bride of Christ be cast in a bad light or a good one?*

KNOW JESUS IS WITH YOU

Let it be real to you that Jesus is right there with you. *“Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.”* (Hebrews 13:5) It’s easier to say something sinful on *Facebook*, email, or *Twitter*, because you are not physically right in front of somebody, but know this: Jesus is right there, and you can shame Him right there in front of that screen.

LOOK FOR THE GOOD IN EVERY SITUATION

Have a special view, a Christ-like view. Why not see the good in every situation? Before you post something, look for something positive in the situation. As mentioned before in Titus, *“Unto the pure all things are pure: but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled.”*

Why not spread a positive attitude in that situation at work instead of negative, and be a light for Christ in a dark world? Why not say something good about something that’s going on at church instead of spreading negativity, complaints, rumors, and even false information?

I encourage you with these helps on how to not vomit on other people: self-examination, have a Savior outlook, focus on Christ, know that Jesus is right there with you, and have a perspective of seeing good in every situation.

A young boy in Korea was a houseboy for some American soldiers. Sometimes they thought it was funny to play harmless jokes on him. They would tease him. They would tie his shoe strings together. They would lock him out of the house.

Eventually they realized that their practical jokes were not viewed as funny by the boy so they apologized. He said, "That's okay, I will stop spitting in your soup now."

Source: The Outlaws of Success, Scott McKain

3

FREEDOM TO SEPARATE

We have the freedom to separate. In James 3:1-3, the Bible tells us, *“My brethren, be not many masters, knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation. For in many things we offend all. If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body. Behold, we put bits in the horses' mouths, that they may obey us; and we turn about their whole body.”* This passage is so practical to social media today. Sometimes that person who you are friends with on *Facebook* is going to say something good, but at times it may be puke – yet you don't have to accept that. You would not stand beside someone who is sick and say, “go ahead, puke all over me, I really like that.” Of course not! You would move, get out of the way, even out of the room! We need to guard our minds and separate ourselves from those who spew their wrong attitudes toward us.

Who are your friends on *Facebook*? Are they going to give you garbage to think about and try to turn you against Jesus Christ? Are they going to turn

you from the people of God, are they going to say negative things against Christianity, are they going to spew gossip all over you? Are you going to stand there and take it, even join them, or say things they want to hear even when you know it's not right?

I remind you again: *Facebook* and social media **can** be used for good things. The church *Facebook* account promotes the cause of Christ as it informs people of how God is working. Your *Facebook* page can be a testimony of your walk with the Lord!

Who do you follow on *Twitter*? You hear of celebrities, athletes, political leaders, diplomats—people who have a following on *Twitter*, which means when they post something, whether it's a clip or quote or garbage, they send it out, and thousands see it and read it. This can affect people's thoughts and perspectives. Who do you text, talk to on the phone, or *Facebook* whose negativity you should be guarding yourself from? When someone starts to spew all over you, why not just let them know in a kind way that you cannot continue this social media relationship? You don't have to spew garbage back at them to do this. A lot of people with good intentions might just spew back at somebody, but you do not have to have an unkind spirit, but can in a nice way say, "What you just told me about so-and-so and the negative things you just said about the church or this teacher or the boss is not Christ-

honoring. I would like to stay friends with you on *Facebook*, but I cannot in good conscience with my Lord,” or “The things you just said about the Sunday school teacher, the preacher, the assistant, your spouse, or your children are not uplifting and Christ-honoring, so I am having to ‘unfriend’ you because of this. Whenever you choose to not gossip and not spew this puke all over me and everyone else, let me know and I may become your friend again on *Facebook*.” You can still be their friend off of *Facebook*, for you need to love them and counsel with them. After all, real relationships are the best ones. Maybe they will grow to a point where they will be responsible in what they post. Be kind and let them know why you can’t look at their posts. Don’t just go through and delete everybody on your email; communicate to them that what they are sending is not helping you in your Christian walk. Tell them you will pray for them that they will change their perspective, and then really pray that they make things right with God. Let them know that you are not always right with God, but this type of communication isn’t helping you. You can let them know in a nice way. Speak the truth in love! (Ephesians 4:15) If you don’t let them know, they will continue to puke on other people, and the sad thing is, other people may sit there and take it, sometimes re-puking it on someone else by

re-tweeting or sharing a post. For those of us who are not on social media, it may be hard to understand what is going on in cyberspace, but this puking really does happen.

Guard your thoughts. There is no reason to let someone vomit all over you. In Proverbs 15:26 the Bible says, *“The thoughts of the wicked are an abomination to the LORD: but the words of the pure are pleasant words.”* Why not think of pure, righteous, and holy things as the Bible teaches? *“The thoughts of the wicked are an abomination.”* Why follow a wicked person? Why not guard your ears and mouth and mind? Abominable words have no place on our lips or in our ears. Acceptable talk should be sought; look for pleasant communication. Proverbs 15:23 says, *“A man hath joy by the answer of his mouth: and a word spoken in due season, how good is it!* It’s a wonderful thing when someone says something good at just the right moment, encouraging and helping someone. Determine to be the one giving acceptable talk to other people, whether by texting, typing, or speaking.

Have Christ-approved thoughts. In Psalm 19:14, the Bible says, *“Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD, my strength, and my redeemer.”* Have thoughts acceptable to God. If you are going to say the right things and if you are going to avoid all the

puke people want to give, it all starts with having the right thoughts. We need to be thinking like God thinks.

When it comes to social media, you better move when someone spews! Do not give an audience to people who are speaking evil. Be like David. Talk to God: “Lord, I don’t want to be around people who are speaking evil, and I don’t want to give them an audience, so would you please help me with that?” And He will.

A man dialed a wrong number and got the following recording: “I am not available right now, but I thank you for caring enough to call. I am making some changes in my life. Please leave a message after the beep. If I do not return your call, you are one of the changes.”

– Unknown

About the Author

Pastor Steve Harness was saved at the age of seven. His father led him to the Lord in their home after a Sunday night service. The Lord has blessed Pastor Harness with many educational and experiential opportunities. Educational opportunities include a Bachelor of Bible, a Master of Ministry, and a Doctorate of Biblical Studies. He is currently pursuing a PhD in Counseling. Experiential opportunities include pastor, youth pastor, Christian school educator, school board president, teen evangelist, camp and conference speaker, radio broadcaster, and many others. He is thankful for each opportunity the Lord has given, and he desires to "serve the Lord with gladness" while seeing people saved and growing in their relationship with the Lord.

For more information, please go to:

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