



In this series we have been learning about many dimensions to navigating life. I appreciate that my wife add it to our understanding last week with a tremendous message on the conquerors mindset. One of my assignments in ministry is to present the word of God in a way that you can use it for your every day life. That's part of the basis for this series, navigate how to successfully journey through life and these times.

Today we're going to get into something that's very much a part of our times, and that is the impact of social media and something called algorithms. Let me say, this is not going to be deep, but it won't be a typical Sermon. You know that we don't do typical sermons.

Going to provide insight and understanding into it people are dealing with every day. So don't be startled at some of the terms I'm going to use, because I'm going to explain it. Only thing I need you to do is pay attention and I guarantee you God will give you understanding.

We're going to take a look at systems that lead to failure and success. Romans 12 verse two says "And do not be conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind."





Ecclesiastes 7:29 ESV

*See, this alone I found, that God made man upright, but they have **sought out many schemes.***

Matthew 6:10

Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

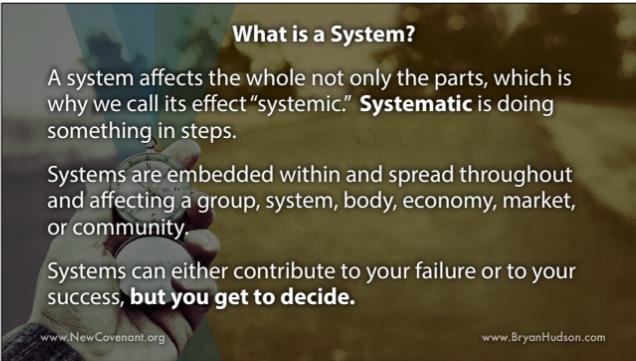
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Navigating systems of God and men is essential for living a productive life. We are all parts of things larger than ourselves. The whole concept of navigating is based on dealing with forces and factors that we cannot control.

What you cannot control, you must navigate. For example, this is the whole point to learning how to drive. An experienced driver has the illusion of controlling the power of a car and traffic. In reality, drivers have learned to navigate how a car works and what to do in traffic as well as within various conditions.

You can see it when training a young person to drive. I remember taking one my children out driving after it snowed. We went to an empty parking lot. The instruction was to drive straight at about 25 miles per hour, and the turn right like normal. The car started to turn but then spun around, and the driver did not know how to control it. Everyone has to learn how to navigate driving on snow. Modern cars can correct for a lot of mistakes. Today we have something called antilock brakes that pulse the brakes on and off quickly when you press the brakes. You don't want the wheels to lock up and start sliding. Back in the day, you were the anti-lock brakes! You were taught to tap and release the brakes quickly until you slowed down in a controlled manner.



What is a System?

A system affects the whole not only the parts, which is why we call its effect "systemic." **Systematic** is doing something in steps.

Systems are embedded within and spread throughout and affecting a group, system, body, economy, market, or community.

Systems can either contribute to your failure or to your success, **but you get to decide.**

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Catholicism is an example of a whole system of religion. They have their own country, called the Vatican. Protestantism (meaning to protest) is a counter to the catholic system. Something started by the 15th Century preacher Martin Luther who challenges Roman Catholic Church corrupt system of selling "indulgences" to absolve sin. Theologians like Augustine (340–430) had emphasized the primacy of the Bible rather than Church officials as the ultimate religious authority. Luther wrote the "Disputation on the Power and Efficacy of Indulgences," also known as "The 95 Theses. Popular legend has it that on October 31, 1517 Luther defiantly nailed a copy of his 95 Theses to the door of the Wittenberg Castle church. Luther's act of

rebellion led to the Protestant Reformation.



There are systems in play in ways that we're not aware of. I was involved in a group of urban and suburban pastors. I thought we were operating on equal terms. We had a meeting they concluded with prayer and smiles. I drove away I remembered that I forgot something. When I returned to the meeting place, the white pastors were having another meeting without us. Then I realized, we were only part of a system of which we were really not a part.

We know that there is a system governing finance, economics, and investments.

We know that there are systems at institutions such as colleges. When students form government and have meetings, make decisions, protest for college, and such. They operate inside of a larger system that guarantees that they will never have real authority. Student government is a system they give students the impression that they're in charge of something. It's also an exercise in understanding the real world.



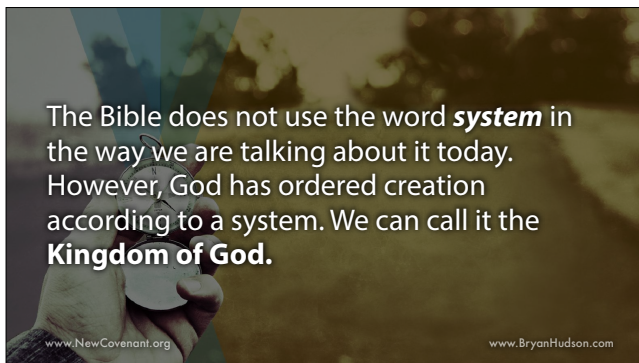
Psalm 103:19, The Lord has established His throne in heaven, And His kingdom rules over all

This does not suggest that God control every outcome. He put the frameworks in place that we have to manage. If you go up on the roof of this building and jump off, the system of God's natural science and gravity will injure or kill you.

Systemic problems occur when systems are developed by people to control people, while keeping fundamentals of the system hidden from "rank and file" type people.

Everything of significance is connected to a system, including God's church and His Kingdom.

What is a system, in the big picture? (We know about systems on a small scale like the system that makes your car or computer work)



The Bible does not use the word system in the way we are talking about it today. However, God has ordered creation according to a system. We can call it the Kingdom of God.

You were born into a world and nation with systems already in place

- Many systems were invented to help you (Family, Education, Kingdom of God).
- Some systems were invented to control people (Segregation & Jim Crow in the past, White Supremacy today).
- Some systems were invented to explain/expose other systems (Direct Action, Critical Race Theory)

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You were born into a world and nation with systems already in place.
Many systems were invented to help you.
Some systems were invented to control you.
Some systems were invented to intimidate you – convince you that you are less than who you are.

Ecclesiastes 7:29 ESV, *See, this alone I found, that God made man upright, but they have sought out many **schemes** (inventions).*

Everyone seeks a “scheme,” devices, or systems for living.

חִשְׁבֹּן - *hishshâbôn* - a contrivance, i.e. actual (a warlike machine) or mental (a machination), engine, invention, reason, device, explanation, planning

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Strong's Definitions [?](Strong's Definitions Legend)
חִשְׁבֹּן *chishshâbôn*, *khish-shaw-bone'*; from H2803; a contrivance, i.e. actual (a warlike machine) or mental (a machination):—engine, invention.

2 Chronicles 26:14

*Then Uzziah prepared for them, for the entire army, shields, spears, helmets, body armor, bows, and slings to cast stones. 15 And he made **devices** in Jerusalem, **invented by skillful men**, to be on the towers and the corners, **to shoot arrows and large stones**. So his fame spread far and wide, for he was marvelously helped till he became strong.*

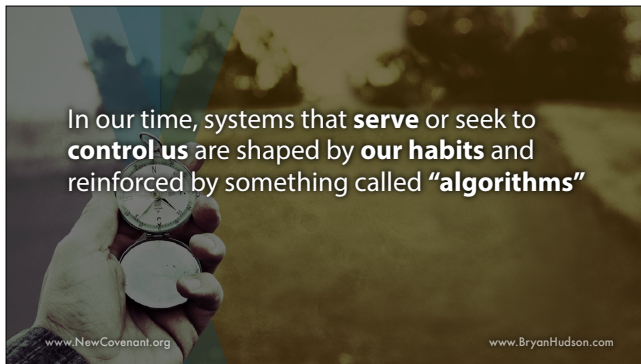
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People are made in the image and likeness of God. We have creative abilities. We can make inventions, devices, and systems.

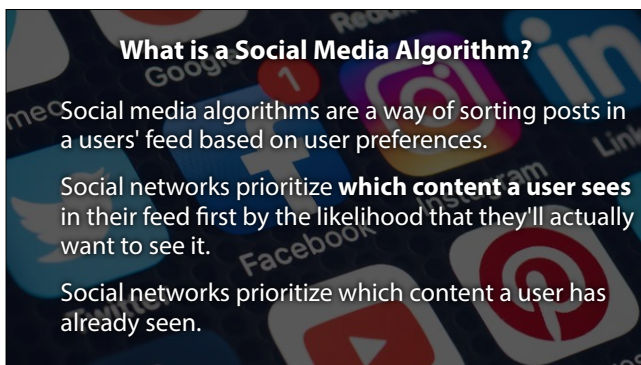
device, invention

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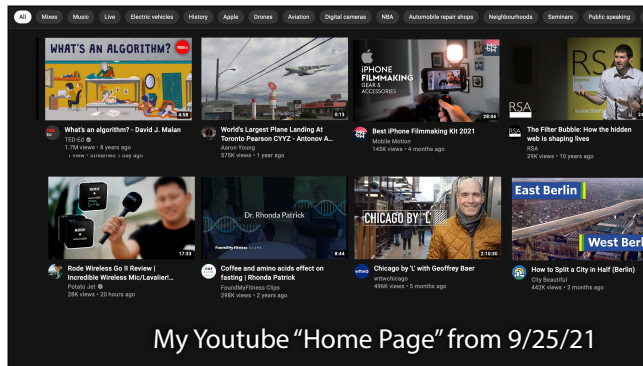
Social media algorithms are a way of sorting posts in a users' feed based on relevancy instead of publish time. Social networks prioritize which content a user sees in their feed first by the likelihood that they'll actually want to see it. Social networks prioritize which content a user sees.

This is especially true for Google and YouTube. On Facebook, if you limit your "friends" to people you actually know, you'll have much less unwanted content. You also don't want to follow "friends" who have crazy friends.



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Every time you hit “refresh,” you get a different result selected by the YouTube algorithm

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The kingdom of God is indeed a system, even though the Bible doesn't use that term. But it fits our definition of a system, “A system affects the whole not only the parts, which is why we call its effect ‘systemic.’”

God's kingdom rules over all, which is a reality for those of us who follow.

The Kingdom System & Algorithm

Matthew 25:29

For to **everyone who has, more will be given**, and he will have abundance; but from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away.

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Managing Your Algorithm

- You attract more of what we allow and approve – Good or bad. **“Garbage in, garbage out.”**
- Your habits drive what you receive.
- Algorithms can work to your benefit and help you stay focused.
- Algorithms can and will **reinforce ignorance** if you don't read **entire books and articles** from **objective** sources.
- Objective truth is one of the three fixed points of successful navigation.

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When I ask Alexa, “What is the weather forecast,” after getting the answer, it sometimes tries to say, “By the way, you can automatically order copy paper every month.” I always say, “Alexa, stop.” That trains the algorithm not to suggest things to me. If you engage it, the algorithm will conclude you want more of the same.

Managing Your Algorithm

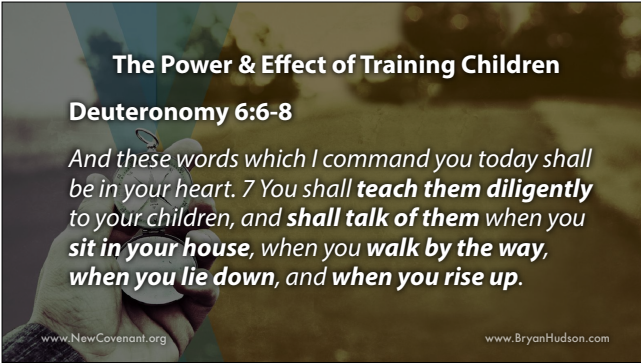
Psalms 119:105

Your word is a **lamp** for my feet, a **light on my path**.

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The best you can do is start your day in God's word and let the Holy Spirit guide you and become your algorithm



The Power & Effect of Training Children


Deuteronomy 6:6-8

*And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. 7 You shall **teach them diligently** to your children, and **shall talk of them** when you **sit in your house**, when you **walk by the way**, when you **lie down**, and when you **rise up**.*

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Training to follow God and his word prepares children to function from a firm foundation and system of God's kingdom. They will be less influenced by other systems and algorithms



Proverbs 29:15

*....A child **left to himself** brings shame to his mother*

Today, "left to himself/herself" includes unmonitored untrained access to social media

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Proverbs 29:15

....A child left to himself brings shame to his mother
Today, "left to himself/herself" includes unmonitored untrained access to social media

It's not just about



It's not all about social media, it is also about **relationship algorithms**

Proverbs 13:20

***Walk with the wise** and become wise; **associate with fools** and get in trouble.*

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How Algorithms Affect People – Dr. Eric Mason



Managing Your Algorithm

Romans 12:2

And **do not be conformed** to this world, but **be transformed** by the **renewing of your mind**, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

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Learning to **Navigate** through **Christ**, the **Word of God**, and **Objective Truth** is the way to live a victorious life!

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