Terms of Service with Chris Martin
Season 3, Episode 2 Transcript

[00:00:09] [Intro] Welcome to the Gospel for Life podcast. We help people grow by connecting truth to life. Here's your host, Darryl Dash.

[00:00:20] Darryl Dash: Hey, welcome back to the podcast, and today we want to talk about social media.

Social media can be amazing, it helps us connect with friends and family, and it can provide inspiration, encouragement, and enjoyment. But we're well aware that it also has a dark side. And we've seen some of the costs of social media in society. And if we're honest in our own lives as well. The question is how can we as Christians live well in a social media world? And today I'm excited to welcome Chris Martin, he's going to help us figure that out. He's written a new book called *Terms of Service: The Real Cost of Social Media*. Chris Martin is somebody I've followed for several years, and he is a content marketing editor at Moody Publishers and also does some social media marketing and communications consulting. Chris lives outside Nashville with his wife Susie, their daughter Magnolia, and their dog. Chris, I'm so glad to have you on the podcast.

[00:01:20] Chris Martin: Thanks, Darryl, it's really good to be on, and I've kept track of your work for a while, too. And I'm grateful for the ways that you curate content and just help people better keep track of what people are writing and doing. I'm just grateful to be able to get to join you for the first time, so I'm glad to be here.

[00:01:37] Darryl Dash: I'm really curious why so many amazing people live around Nashville. So I wasn't planning on asking you that, is that a Lifeway effect, or what is that?

[00:01:46] Chris Martin: That's a really good question because you're right. I think in terms of the Christian space, the evangelical space, you've got like Southern Baptist Convention headquarters is here. So anybody who is affiliated with the Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission, like Dr. Russell Moore or Dan Darling, Jason Backer, and so many of those folks. Before many of them either left that organization or maybe went remote before they even left. They were working at the SBC headquarters building, which was right across the street from Lifeway. So there you have two buildings that were literally across the street from one another. In fact, we could look in one another's offices and make faces at each other; you had all of us there. Now, obviously it's very different with remote work and things like that. So yeah, I think you've got that, you've got a number of maybe large churches here that have had influence beyond the bounds of Nashville, Brentwood Baptist Church or Grace.

[00:02:42] So yeah, it's really interesting. I did come to Nashville originally, back in 2013 to work at Lifeway. In fact, my first job out of college was managing the blog and social media of Ed Stetzer who some of your listeners may know, and so that's what drew me here. And then I'm grateful that I get to work for a great organization like Moody Publishers now, and I get to do it staying here in the Nashville area. Though I love Chicago Land, and you won't hear me complain if they ever called me up there. But I do love the people here, our church community, and it's really great to kind of have a leg in Nashville, which has become home, and a leg in Chicago, which is one of my favorite places anywhere.

[00:03:20] Darryl Dash: Well, the weather might be a little bit better in Nashville, and the barbecue as well.

[00:03:26] Chris Martin: Which is funny you say that because as you say that, I'm looking outside at our second five-inch snowfall in four days, which is seriously unprecedented for this area. But I am a northerner originally, I'm from Northern Indiana, so I actually like winter, I like snow. My wife is grateful for the fact that it is usually much warmer here than it is where we're from back in Indiana. But I do love the giant white flakes falling from time to time, and though we get them very rarely, it's been a beautiful sight today, that's for sure.

[00:04:01] Darryl Dash: Nashville probably shuts down with a little bit of snow, unlike Chicago, but yeah, that's okay.

[00:04:05] Chris Martin: Yeah, not all four snowplows can be across the city at the same time.

[00:04:12] Darryl Dash: Chris, what made you write this book?

[00:04:14] Chris Martin: It's a great question, a common one. I have been really impacted by the work of Neil Postman, who's a 20th-century American commentator on media, ecology, and the relationship of technology and media and sociology. His book *Amusing Ourselves to Death*, which was published in 1985. For anybody who's interested in social media or just like media in general, that book, you should pick it up and read it if you haven't. But chances are if you're interested in these topics, you already have read it, and it's just really great work. I read it for the first time, I want to say back in 2015, 2016, and it was one of the most paradigm-shifting books for me that I've ever read. Honestly, it is the most impactful book for me I've ever read outside of scripture. It really changed the way I view the world. A little bit of personal note about me because it's relevant to this discussion, I grew up in northeast Indiana, my dad worked for IBM. He worked for IBM for 27 years. He got a computer science degree from Purdue University back when computers took up entire rooms.

[00:05:25]: And he was working for IBM, one of the biggest computer companies in the world, and he was working from our home. He was a remote worker before it was cool back in the early 90s. And so I grew up with computers and the internet in my house from the earliest age. I remember playing Sesame Street video games on floppy disks when I was barely in kindergarten. And so I just remember engaging with technology and the internet and really being on the bleeding edge of so many of these technological innovations from a very young age. For a long time, I wanted to go into the industry, I wanted to go out and work for some of the companies we may talk about today. Then I realized you usually have to be pretty good at math, and I'm more of a words guy than a math guy.

[00:06:10]: So I was like yeah, I don't think that's for me, but I wrote the book because I was so impacted by Neil Postman. And so I've always been so interested in the social internet and social media and its impact on our relationship with each other that it would be helpful if somebody tried to take the sort of ethos of Neil Postman, the sort of ethic, the ideas that he proposes in amusing ourselves to death about how we are, quite frankly 'amusing ourselves to death.' The title is a very good one on that book. And took kind of fast-forward and said I asked myself the question, I said if Neil Postman were around today and he was a believer, he was a Christian, he was very kind to the Christian faith, but was not himself a believer, as far as we know. What if he were around today in our social media landscape and he was a believer, what would he have to say to us, either globally to everyone or to Christians specifically? And so I said I would totally love to read a book like that or regular writing like that.

[00:07:13: And I was having trouble finding it, frankly. And so I said well, I'm really interested in social media, and I have a theological education undergrad degree in a seminary and MDiv. I was like what if I tried to kind of be that? Not saying I could be Neil Postman, I do not claim that level of intellect, but I really think there is a need for that kind of perspective in our space, and so rather than long for it, I just decided I'll try to be that. And so I started my Terms of Service newsletter, which is a twice-weekly newsletter that I write. And I propose the book around the same time at the beginning of 2020, right around when the pandemic was all kind of going on. So yeah, that's kind of what was motivating for me to begin with.

[00:07:56] Darryl Dash: And it seems we really don't know what to do with the whole social media thing as much as we know the concepts that Postman talked about. It seems like we've just either embraced the internet and social media or completely written it off and avoided it. So how does your book try to help us to figure out how to do it and not just gravitate towards uncritical embrace or complete avoidance of it?

[00:08:25] Chris Martin: I'm so glad you're asking this question because one of the most common assumptions people make when they see that I wrote a book about social media that has a big frowny face on the cover made up of a bunch of smiley face emojis, they assume oh, social media is bad. Like this is a Christian book about how social media is evil. And I will be the first to say that it is a more negative book than a positive one, but I don't think it's unduly negative. I think writing a positive book about social media today would be a little bit disingenuous. But I think it's important to me that my primary charge is not only in the book, but in all of my writing or speaking that I do on this topic, my primary charge is never delete your accounts. Social media is evil, Facebook is out to take over the world, and it's never that. Not only because it's not true, but because I don't think deleting social media accounts fixes anything. Now if you're addicted to social media and it's overtaking your life and it's hindering your relationships with other people and with the Lord. And you're addicted in such a way that it's really hindering your ability to live as a Christ-follower and productive husband, wife worker, church member, whatever. I do think that locking yourself out of your accounts and giving somebody else the keys is probably a wise step to take.

[00:09:47]: However, I don't believe that if we all just hashtag quit Facebook or whatever, delete Facebook, I don't think that would fix the problem. Because I think the problems that have been unearthed by our relationship with social media don't go away if we just delete our own accounts. If you or I deleted our social media accounts today, we would show up to church on Sunday or to

small group on Tuesday night and somebody would say, "Hey, do you see what so and so posted on Facebook? Or did you see that latest TikTok trend? Or did you see X, Y, or Z?" There would be no way to escape it. I used an analogy in the book of we're like fish in water. It's pulled from David Foster Wallace's "This is water speech," at Kenyan College back in 2003. But I really think we are like fish living in water. There's no way for us to live outside of social media at this point. It's really difficult, if not impossible, to live outside of the influence of social media, and it's increasingly that way.

[00:10:48]: So I think our best course of action is, yes, neither to uncritically embrace, because unfortunately I think that's where a lot of us have found ourselves just uncritically embracing these platforms. I don't think it's right either to just wholly dismiss them. A because I think they're helpful in some regard in the same ways that maybe you do, and B because I just think it's quite impossible. And so I think our best course of action is to realize that the water in which we swim is toxic and to put our gas masks on, if you will, and learn how to live in this toxic water and perhaps do what we can to make it a little bit less so.

[00:11:26]: Darryl Dash: In the book you use the term not social media as much as social Internet. Wonder what you meant by using that term because social media is probably more in a common language or vernacular. What did you mean by social Internet?

[00:11:42] Chris Martin: Yeah, this is a hard thing for me to talk about. It was a hard decision for me to make because I believe strongly in the term the social internet. However, I knew I was going to have to do a little bit of education of readers in this regard because social media is one of the most common words, phrases or terminologies I heard daily just in conversation with friends. And social internet is harder to say, it's not as commonly used, and I knew that I'd be digging myself a little bit of a hole. However, the whole point of this book is to help us have a more robust, mature relationship with these tools. And so I thought a little bit of terminology education would accomplish the goal of the book, even if it were a little bit tongue tiey and a little bit more difficult. So the whole point of using the term social internet rather than social media is when we use the term social media. When I use that term or any of us, there are probably a few logos that pop into our heads, a few apps on our phones that pop into our heads.

[00:12:47]: We think of Facebook and Snapchat, Instagram, TikTok, YouTube, perhaps. A lot of us don't even think of YouTube as social media, but we think of these apps. However, a lot of the principles of the book, a lot of what I talk about in the book, and a lot of how I think we're being shaped by these platforms goes

far beyond those four or five or six apps and logos that we think of. A lot of people don't realize that Amazon book reviews are social media or those Google results. When you Google 'What's the internal temperature to which I cook chicken when you can't remember? What is it supposed to be when you're grilling or when you're cooking it in the oven? How hot is it supposed to be? The result that comes up in Google is created by a real person as of right now anyway. When you're looking up, I want to take my spouse on a date to a restaurant for their birthday, and you're looking at Yelp reviews for restaurants on which Thai place you should visit, those are created by people, and that is social media.

[00:13:46]: And this whole stage of Web 2.0, which is the current stage of the internet in which we live. Web 3.0 is knocking on the door, Web 1.0 is far behind us. This Web 2.0, where we're consuming content, but also creating content is really all social beyond even the social media platforms that come to mind when we use that term social media. So really, the whole reasoning of using the term social internet is my effort to get us thinking about our relationship with the social internet as holy social. Not just oh, I posted on my friend's Facebook wall or I DMed my buddy from school, that is social media. But so are a lot of other interactions we have, and my hope is to broaden our scope of what that is.

[00:14:34] Darryl Dash: That's really helpful because I think a lot of us think maybe we're avoiding social media when we're still engaging with the social Internet without even realizing the way we're being shaped by that. So, yeah, that's really helpful. Well Chris, talked to us about some of the ways that you see the social Internet changing us.

[00:14:52] Chris Martin: Man, I could list so many. Let me also address one other reason I like the social internet and social media. I almost think of the social Internet as the utensils. If you're sitting at a dinner table, the social internet is the table and the knife and the plate and the fork. It's all of the tools you need to consume content and social media is the food on the plate. And so when it comes to thinking about social internet and social media, we need to understand that we're influenced and we're changed. We're discipled frankly, not only by the food on the plate, the content we consume, but we're influenced, we're discipled, and we're shaped by the utensils, the tools, the literal technologies. And the ones and zeros of algorithms that undergird that content that we consume. So anyway, that was another random note that I forgot to include in that discussion. But in a similar part of that conversation, some of the ways that we should be thinking, I think, about how social media is changing us is when social media came around, the whole pitch was that social media is a tool to make our lives better in one way or the other.

[00:16:00]: It will let you connect with high school friends, or you can raise money to pay for medical procedures through GoFundMe or whatever. The idea is that social media is a tool to serve us. But in reality, I think we've come to serve social media more than it serves us. So I think that happens because we're hopelessly addicted to social media platforms and aspects of the entire social internet. I've been in countless conversations over the years with people who feel like they couldn't quit social media, even if they tried, and they just honestly feel enslaved. And those are the kinds of people that I think may benefit from deleting their accounts or at least locking the door and giving somebody else the key. Another way that we're being shaped by these platforms is we provide so many of these platforms with countless gigabytes of our data, and our data is what makes them billions of dollars. And I think a lot of us don't understand the gravity of the trade that we have made of our personal information for the ability to express ourselves. I am regularly shocked that one of the most shocking, genuinely jaw-dropping experiences I have on an almost weekly basis is seeing friends or acquaintances of mine that I'm connected with on social media, seeing the extent to which they are willing to give up personal details about themselves in exchange for expressing themselves.

[00:17:33]: I had a friend the other day who tested positive for COVID. And this friend posted on Facebook a picture of their positive COVID test result. Which included their doctor's name, their doctor's address, their personal address, their phone number, the doctor's phone number, their patient ID number, and their account number at the doctor's office. I could have gone in and paid these persons' bills, charged bills to them, made appointments for them and that's not an outlier. I mean we hear that, and it's like oh my gosh, I'd never do that; probably. But it is amazing to me the degree to which we have become comfortable with these platforms and the amount of information that we're willing to put into them in exchange for really nothing other than expressing ourselves. My wife and I, when our daughter was born a couple of years ago, made the conscious decision at my leading, though my wife did come around on it by not posting pictures of our daughter on the Internet. I've heard too many stories of friends who have had pictures of their kids taken and used in ways they didn't want. I have, as you can imagine, a pretty staunch stance on data privacy and protection, especially images of minors on the Internet.

[00:18:47]: And so we made that conscious decision and some family members and friends were like, "How could you do that, aren't people mad at you?" And we have ways of sharing pictures with friends and family who want to see our daughter that aren't on social media. But I said think about if you went back to the year 2002, 2003 and you were to tell parents back then "Hey, in ten years, it's going to be normal for you to post pictures of your kids when they're in the bathtub or when they're in the backyard playing with your dog all the time."

They'd be like, "That's crazy, that'd be so weird. Who would do that?" And now today, if you don't do that, you're the weird one. People kind of look at us like "You weirdos, how are you not posting pictures of your kid on social media?" If you go back not even a decade and say to people that this is going to be normal, they look at you like you're crazy.

[00:19:39]: The third and final way that I think the social internet is really changing us and informing us is we try to earn others' attention at all costs. Attention is the currency of the social internet. It's how we feel good, it's how we kind of get rich. When people pay us attention online, we really feel most alive. I think one of the reasons we keep coming back to social media, even though we see plenty of data that say it's not good for mental health and perhaps we have personal experiences of how it's not good for mental health. I think part of the reason we come back is social media offers us the incredibly alluring ability to feel other people's love and to feel other people's affirmation. To be paid attention and to get this general vibe, this feeling that we matter and that we're valuable, we get that feeling, and we do not have to be vulnerable. We do not have to let people know who we truly are. I think a lot of us are just really afraid of being truly known. We're really afraid of true intimacy, but we want the payoff of intimacy, we want that feeling of being loved and affirmed and cared for.

[00:20:55]: And I think the social internet for so many of us, myself included, at various stages in my life, I'm no paragon of virtue here. So many of us want the encouragement and the affirmation and the feelings of love that we get from engaging with people online, the likes and the retweets and the other pats on the back that we feel without the cost of vulnerability and intimacy. Because the vulnerability and intimacy of true embodied loving relationships can just be too great a burden to bear and frankly too scary I think for a lot of us.

[00:21:31] Darryl Dash: That's really helpful. Help us understand maybe how Web 3.0 or the Metaverse, whatever you want to call it, is going to drive some of these trends even more? I know a lot of people who are even trying to understand what it's going to look like and other people who are trying to say, don't panic, there are good things about it. How do you see these trends accelerating with Web 3.0?

[00:21:54] Chris Martin: I'm starting to pay a lot more attention to Web 3.0. I'm in a group text message with a handful of Christians who are thinking about this topic, and one of the guys named the group non-fungible Tolkiens. Which I think is just hilarious if you know what NFTs are our non-fungible tokens, and he called this group the non-fungible Tolkiens. And so it's a text message group where we share articles that we're reading or thoughts that we have about these various developments. I'm simultaneously encouraged and discouraged by what

I'm seeing in the development of Web 3. If you're listening and you're not familiar with Web 3, I'll give some surface-level explanation of it, but there are several great podcasts and things that you can listen to and read about this evolution of the internet. But really, if you're listening and you're like, what's Web 3? It's like the decentralization of the internet, ideally, so it's like where Web 1.0 is. Here's what the internet was like in the 80s, 90s, when most of us were just consuming content. Most of us were not creating content for the internet. We were just going on to read or sometimes eventually watch content.

[00:23:04]: Web 2.0 is the Internet stage, kind of that we're in now, where you're both reading content on the Internet and writing content on the Internet. So it goes from read to read/write, that's Web 2.0. And that's the social Internet, right? That's where we're at, that's where we've been since the late 90s, early 2000s with the earliest iterations of social media and to where we are today. And that's obviously where a lot of my focus is Web 2.0. Web 3.0 is similar to Web 2.0 in that there's plenty of consuming content and creating content. And this is ideal, I remain skeptical, as if it will actually happen this way, but the ideal is that instead of a few major companies controlling the Internet in the future, like Google and Facebook do today, everybody will share in the ownership of the future of the Internet. Where today on Facebook, if you went on and posted, hey, here's what I'm having for dinner tonight, or here's a really interesting article that I read. And if you got a bunch of likes, shares and comments on that piece of content that you posted, you don't benefit at all monetarily from that. You just get the affirmation and attention of people, which is plenty payment enough, as we've seen, because plenty of people use these platforms.

[00:24:14]: However, there could be a future social media platform. I mean, there are some that already exist, but there could be a future popular social media platform like Facebook in which every like you get, you actually get paid a quarter, and every comment you get, you get paid $0.50. Or maybe every share you get, you get paid a dollar, and you start making money based on the engagement that you get on social media. There are very primitive versions of social media platforms like this that exist that could be some symbol of the future. So that's an idea of what Web 3 looks like. Obviously wrapped up in Web 3 is blockchain technology and the Metaverse, which gosh who even knows what that is at this point because everybody's just co-opting it for whatever they want. But I think in the future, the promise of Web 3 is that it will be decentralized, that it won't be focused. And all the money won't be routed to Google or Facebook or whoever else, but that everybody will have a little bit more of an ownership stake.

[00:25:11]: I think that is a super optimistic and super encouraging promise. I think that sounds really good, but I'm skeptical of that in the same way that I'm

skeptical of the earliest social media founders like Zuckerberg or Jack Dorsey, who had a little bit too high a view of humanity going into the creation of their platforms. In my view, Zuckerberg and Dorsey and others who created these platforms we use today didn't fully grasp the depravity of humanity. And I think we've seen that play out over the last four or five years, if not obviously longer than that. My fear with Web 3 in this decentralization where everybody owns everything and it's very much more democratically run, if you will, or at least much more spread out in terms of authority and power, I just don't trust people enough. I think that sounds really nice to not have power consolidated into these major trillion-dollar companies, I think that sounds good. Because the less power major corporations have, maybe the less corrupted these platforms can become, and the less they can be used for evil. But man, I just have too robust the theology of original sin and human depravity to think that giving everybody a little bit of power is necessarily going to be better than giving a couple of large companies most of the power.

[00:26:35]: And so while I remain optimistic about the future of the Internet, and obviously wrapped up in Metaverse is like VR and all of that. I do think that VR is closer than maybe a lot of people realize, but I don't have this sort of dystopian idea that in five to ten years we're all going to be just like sitting with VR headsets on and never leaving our houses. I don't think we're approaching Wally territory, right? If you've ever seen that movie where these humans are just like bloated giant people that never leave their little spaceship and just always have VR headsets. I don't think we're going to be there anytime soon, but I do think we're going to have to start grappling a lot more with ideas of what does it mean to be human? Like the theology of the body is going to be so incredibly important, I mean, it already is important, but it's just going to be so much more important to define the importance of the human body and the importance of embodied presence with people. And so I just think that I agree with anyone who says we shouldn't be afraid because I agree we shouldn't be afraid. But I do think that we should be a little bit less willing to critically embrace whatever comes next than we were when our current technologies came about.

[00:27:50] Darryl Dash: Chris, I hate to ask you this question, it's actually a two-part question, and I know the obvious answer would be, read your book, which I hope people do. But what are some ways that first, individuals can respond to the social internet? And then secondly, what are some ways of churches that we can help our people be disciples so that they're prepared to handle the social Internet in a healthy way?

[00:28:12] Chris Martin: I think one of the most important things we can do is to just slow down individually. I'll speak to individuals and I'll speak to churches. Individually, I think we just need to slow down in our quick adoption of these

platforms. And I say this again, as someone who is a chronic early adopter, I was on TikTok back in 2018, long before it was popular. I don't say that to sound like hipster and cool, I just mean like I'm an early adopter as much as anybody. So I understand the draw of checking out these platforms super early on before they're kind of mainstream. But I think we should be very careful to ask a lot of questions about these platforms before we wholesale embrace them. Neil Postman is famous for asking a question of any technology. He said, "Whenever I've come across a new technology, I always ask the question 'to what problem is this technology a solution?' " And I think we should always be asking the question to what problem is this social media platform a solution? What problem is this solving for me?

[00:29:23]: In a recent article in my newsletter, I wrote just how to handle social media more wisely going into this New Year, 2022. And I said that we should ask questions like what am I hoping comes out of my relationship with Instagram? Or what do I hope that Twitter can accomplish for me in my life? What's my goal here? What's the point? Because I think intentionality is everything, and I think that applies to a lot of areas of life, frankly. That we get in a lot of trouble if we just let life happen to us rather than if we try to effect change, like take intentional hold of what we're doing in our lives. And so I think we should resist just letting social media and various aspects of the social internet just happen to us. Maybe we should accept fewer Terms of Services, I guess you could say, and leave notifications off a little bit more frequently. Don't just say yes to everything. So that's what I would say personally. Again, I'm not saying delete everything, I'm not saying log off, I'm just saying we asked a lot of questions of people who influence our kids, we probably put our schools through the wringer on what they're educating our kids about.

[00:30:39]: If our pastor is preaching something kind of sketchy, we're like hey, I don't really know about this. We might need to look somewhere else or at least press our pastor, "Why did you say that? I don't know if that's biblical." I don't think we have a problem using critical thinking in certain areas of our lives, but I do think we have a problem using critical thinking as it pertains to our relationship with these platforms. And I just think we should have a little bit better critical thinking skills. For pastors or church leaders, people who have some sort of influence in the local church, because I lead a small group at my church and I help lead the student ministry, I think first we need to check ourselves. You don't have to have a perfect relationship with social media to help lead others to improve their relationship with social media. And none of us have a perfect relationship with these platforms. so don't feel like you can't say anything because sometimes you use Instagram too much. Just don't be prideful, admit the fact that you're not perfect, but then understand that almost everyone you lead in some respect is being influenced by these platforms.

[00:31:48]: They may not even have an unhealthy relationship with them, they just may be influenced by them in an undue way. And in ways that may lead them down paths of foolishness and paths of righteousness and wisdom. So recognize that everyone you lead in some respect is probably influenced by these platforms in some way. And then here's another thing that's kind of a new revelation, a little bit of it is in this book. Been working on a second book for next spring that I'll delve into this topic a little bit more, what I've learned very recently is an increasing number of people really do not see what they do on the Internet as real life. I spoke with a few pastors recently, and all of them gave me similar stories of times in which they talked with a church member about something that they saw the church member post on social media. And one of the examples was the church member was out of line and posting something they really shouldn't have on social media, and the church leaders had to confront that person. So obviously that's going to be a tense conversation.

[00:33:00] Another one of the conversations that a pastor had with a church member was the church member posted "Hey, I'm having a tough day, tough week, I could really use some encouragement and some prayer ." And a church leader reached out to that person about that post about if there's a way that the church could support them. And in every case that I was given an example of, the church members were offended and hurt that the church would reach out and talk about what the church member posted on social media. Both in the situation in which the church was trying to help and support and perhaps a bit more understandably in which the church was trying to correct and provide some correction, guidance, I suppose you could say, and discipline. And I was shocked. I was like wow, really? And the pastor, especially the one who was trying to help and support, said "Yeah, the woman in our church said 'what I do on social media is none of the church's business. It's private, and it's between me and my social media friends, I don't want the church to be involved.' "

[00:34:00] Darryl Dash: Wow.

[00:34:01] Chris Martin: And I've learned just in a few conversations with other pastors saying "Have you heard anything like this in your churches? This is actually quite common, that people sort of feel who they are online is disconnected from who they are offline. And unfortunately, who they are online is sort of becoming a primary persona, and who they are offline is almost more downstream and derivative of who they are online. So it's like the real and the physical is taking the back seat to the virtual and the digital. And so this is a problem that I think is maybe not new, but it's kind of coming to light a lot more recently. It's certainly sort of new to me, at least the severity of it. And back to

the Web 3 question, I think that's something that perhaps could really be exacerbated by some of the developments we see coming with Web 3.

[00:34:54] Darryl Dash: Well, I really appreciate your book, and you're somebody that I've appreciated learning from for a long period of time now. Your newsletter is really helpful, and I'm so glad you've written this book to help us, and I'm looking forward to your next book as well. I want to ask you a couple of personal questions, what are you learning lately?

[00:35:13] Chris Martin: Oh man, what am I learning? I'm learning to be a parent. So we have an almost two-year-old, she'll be two in April, her name is Maggie, and she is wonderful. Honestly, it's our first child, but she has been an easy kid in so many respects. She sleeps really well, she's generally obedient. I mean, she obviously has her moments where the terrible twos approach, and we're feeling them, but she's just really a joy. But I have a wide variety of interests, I love studying the stuff we've talked about today, I like playing video games. I like reading a lot, I like reading fiction/nonfiction, I love reading early American history nonfiction, and I love reading, like Sci-Fi. I love playing video games with my friends or with students in our student industry.

[00:36:08]: I have so many varied interests that the wrestle of this kind of boxing match between maintaining my own personality and my own hobbies and some measure of personal time while being a faithful employee, church member, husband and now parent, has just been a fight. I've been getting up earlier in the morning, so I can have more personal time in the morning to not only do my devotions, but read a book that's interesting to me so that I have time to spend time with my wife in the evenings and my daughter when I get off work. And so honestly, one of the things I'm learning most right now is, frankly, outside of a lot of the subject matter we've talked about. It's just like learning how to balance my interests and engage them while also not prioritizing them over my responsibilities as a husband and a father.

[00:37:03] Darryl Dash: Yeah, that's a lifelong struggle. I guess struggle is the right word, a lifetime struggle for me, for sure. And what's encouraging you lately?

[00:37:15] Chris Martin: What's encouraging me lately? Well I've been really encouraged by my daughter's development, not to go back to my daughter, but it's just been such a joy. We're just coming out of the Christmas season, at least at the time we're recording this. And it was just such a joy to have a couple of weeks off to spend with her and to watch her develop. Also, leading our community group is a joy to me. We just have a small community group, it's three couples and a single woman, and it's been so wonderful to see. We've

been with this community group for three or four years now. We've been through COVID, we've walked through that together, we had a daughter at the beginning of COVID. One couple had a child in October, and another couple just had a child at Christmas, and so it's been really fun. You know, I want to move as few times in my life as possible. I want to live in as few houses as possible, live in as few towns as possible, and I really hope that I never have to leave this group. This is a group of people that I want to bury me.

[00:38:22]: And it's been so encouraging to watch them change and grow from newlyweds to parents and through communication difficulties and getting in touch with emotions. Us guys have walked through, how do we better support our wives emotionally? And just like the development of those conversations in our community group over the last, even just year has been so encouraging to me. So I think that's really been on my heart lately as one of the more encouraging things that I've really just seen a lot of joy in the Lord in.

[00:38:57] Darryl Dash: It really is a privilege. We just had a grandson, and the amount of joy that you get from these young wives is just incredible. So I'm glad that you're enjoying your daughter that much. Enjoy that, I mean this is such an old person thing to say, but it really is true, those years go by quickly, so enjoy every moment of it. And your book comes out on which date?

[00:39:20] Chris Martin: February 1st.

[00:39:21] Darryl Dash: And where can people find out more about your book and your newsletter?

[00:39:25] Chris Martin: Of course. So I'm on Twitter at @ChrisMartin17, that's probably my most active social media platform and there you can connect with me. I love talking with people and DMing and just getting conversations about this stuff so you can reach out to me there. There's a link to the book and or my newsletter in my bio and then termsofservicebook.com is where you can find the best place that you would like to preorder it, wherever you would like to do that. The newsletter would be termsofservice.social, so that's where you can find the stuff. But if you have trouble figuring out all that, just reach out to me on Twitter @ChrisMartin17 and we'll chat.

[00:40:07] Darryl Dash: Well Chris you've been somebody…I really mean this, I've read your stuff. I think I was telling you, I heard about you through Trevin Wax and just appreciate it. You've always put out helpful material and I'm excited about this book. I love the Ministry of Moody Publishers and I'm grateful for your work there and I'm glad for this book that's coming out with Bradman

and Holman as well. And pray that this book is a blessing to many people, so thank you for joining us today.

[00:40:32] Chris Martin: Thank you so much Darryl, it's been a joy. I'm so grateful for you as well and I pray that the Lord will just continue to bless you and your work to steward the gifts that he's given you.

[00:40:42] Darryl Dash: I appreciate that, thanks.

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