



# What Kind of Messages Should You Be Forwarding to Others?

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Who amongst us has not received a message (sent also to a huge number of people) asking us to forward it to as many people as we can? Some of these messages end with a challenge to "repost it if you love Jesus" or a promise of "ten blessings in the next ten days." Some are far more sinister and end with a threat if you break the chain. Chain letters are on the rise and usually fall into one of the following categories:

- A story of a sick child who needs to raise money for an expensive operation.
- A petition for some social cause requiring you to submit some personal details.
- A warning of a virus circulating over the web that threatens to crash users' operating systems.
- A promise of money for each new person you are able to enroll in some get-rich-quick scheme

- Threats of bad luck or death if you refuse to pass the message on to others
- A hoax supposedly signed by a recognizable icon (Bill Gates is giving away \$1000 to the first fifty people who forward this email).

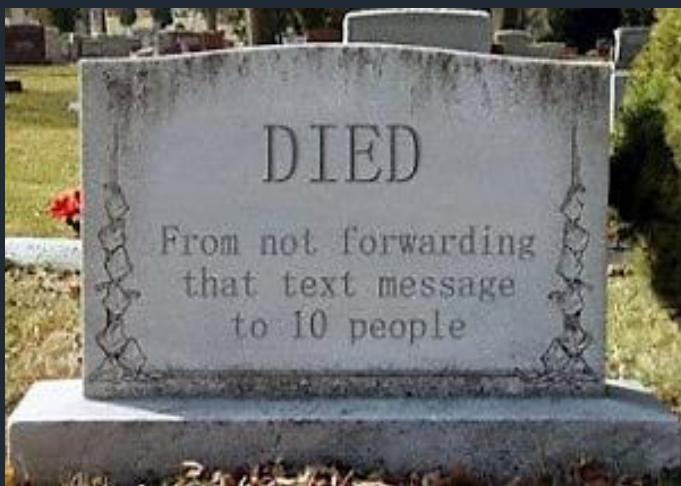
**Here are some biblical principles to guide you when forwarding messages:**

1. Forward only messages you know to be true. As children of light we should not want to be a part of spreading lies (Psa. 119:29, 104). Before we forward messages we should do some fact-checking. The Berean Christians fact-checked the message Paul gave them because it was important for them to know that he was speaking the truth (Acts 17:11). It is part of our responsibility as Christians to research the institution/person who asks for personal information or money in order to ensure that they are authentic and reputable. Further, when Christians pass on messages the motivating force should be love (Jn. 21:17; II Cor. 5:14), not the superstitious fear that is often the power behind chain letters. Significantly, superstition is condemned in Scripture (Isa. 2:6, NIV; Deut. 18:10).

2. Do not force or threaten people in order to manipulate their decision.

4:00am-10:00pm please read this.. Not joking.. God has seen you struggling with something. God says its over. A blessing is coming your way. If you believe in God send this message and please dont ignore it. You are being tested. GOD will fix two things (BIG) tonight in your favor. If you believe in God drop everything and pass it on. Tomorrow will be the best day of your life. Send this to 30 kind friends in 20mins after reading✓

Whose message are you communicating when you make people feel guilty or fearful because they do not do what you ask them to do in a message you forward to them? Let your warnings to others be in keeping with the warnings given in Scripture. To overstep this boundary is to assume counterfeit spiritual authority. God rebuked the prophets of Jeremiah's day with these words: "I did not send these prophets, yet they have run with their message; I did not speak to them, yet they have prophesied" (Jer. 23:21). Would God not rebuke us as well for passing on messages He does not endorse?



3. Take seriously the biblical warnings about false teachers and false teachings. They peddle their wares on social media just as

they would any other place where there are people gullible enough to believe them. II Peter 2:3a (NIV) has this to say: "In their greed these teachers will exploit you with fabricated stories." The security company Bullguard gave this timely bit of advice:

*Do not fall for great news from wealthy people or big companies that are spreading via e-mail or social networks only. If the news were really true, the entire media, including newspapers, TV, radio etc. would be buzzing with official statements.*

4. Think biblically about this question: "How would Jesus use social media if He were here in person today?" Since He is the Living Word, and the Word of God abides forever, would you expect to see anything that diminishes the Word in His Twitter account, His Facebook / Instagram post or in the WhatsApp messages He sends out? Hardly! Scriptures that encourage us to imitate Christ like I Corinthians 11:1 and I John 2:6 should certainly guide us as we pass on messages today.□