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ABSTRACT

FACING THE CHALLENGE OF MOBILE TECHNOLOGY: A
SEMINAR ON STRENGTHENING INTIMACY IN FAMILIES
AT THE HENDERSONVILLE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST
CHURCH

by

David Nicholas Wright

Adviser: Ronald M. Flowers

ABSTRACT OF GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH

Professional Dissertation

Andrews University

Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

Title: FACING THE CHALLENGES OF MOBILE TECHNOLOGY: A SEMINAR
ON STRENGTHENING INTIMACY IN FAMILIES AT THE
HENDERSONVILLE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH

Name of researcher: David Nicholas Wright

Name and degree of faculty adviser: Ronald M. Flowers, DMin

Date completed: August 2019

The Problem

The new wave of smartphones and other forms of mobile technology presents an always available Internet connection that is hard for many families to manage. Without sufficient awareness of technology's subtle impact on relationships and without appropriate boundaries, many suffer loss of face-to-face interaction, communication and intimacy within their family circles.

The Method

The purpose of this project was to investigate whether a five-session educational seminar would create greater awareness and motivate changes in mobile technology usage that is seen as beneficial to parents and family.

The Results

Of the 11 families who committed to coming to the five-session educational seminar, eight were able to attend all five sessions. A comparison of pre-interviews and post-interviews determined that the seminar was useful in raising awareness, stimulating more responsible use of mobile technology, and encouraging families toward deeper levels of intimacy. As a result of the many tools placed in the hands of the parents, members of each family made some type of change in their mobile technology usage and felt better equipped to talk with their children and each other about appropriate parameters.

Conclusions

This educational experience for the Hendersonville Seventh-day Adventist Church was useful in raising awareness regarding the advantages and dangers of mobile technology. Participants gained not only insights and practical skills in Internet management but greater understanding of their family dynamics as well as enhanced skill in dialogue and communication with each other.

Andrews University
Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

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CHURCH

A Professional Dissertation
Presented in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Ministry

by
David Nicholas Wright

August 2019

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APPROVAL BY THE COMMITTEE:

Adviser,
Ronald M. Flowers

Director, DMin Program
Kleber D. Gonçalves

May-Ellen Colon

Dean, Seventh-day Adventist
Theological Seminary
Jiří Moskala

Richard Sylvester

6/18/2019
Date approved

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

With so many recent developments in mobile technology, one of the begging questions of our time is asked by Chapman and Pellicane (2014): “Is technology bringing your family closer together, or is it driving your family farther apart”? (p. 7). The landscape has shifted. Not until recently did we have a device in our pockets that could send and receive email, text, share pictures, call, navigate, check the weather, and watch videos, just to name a few. In fact, in 2014, more time was spent on the Internet through mobile devices than personal computers, which is seen as a shift of mammoth proportions (Murtagh, 2014). The purpose of this study was to see what impact mobile technology is having on our closest relationships. Can mobile technology bring spouses closer together? Are parents communicating with each other and their kids more often and more effectively with smartphones? Or could it be that mobile technology is interfering with some of the basic components of effective communication? Is mobile technology replacing eye contact and conversations at the dinner table? Could mobile technology be consuming time that would otherwise be used to connect with one’s children? What is the research telling us?

This introductory chapter portrays a ministry context in which mobile technology is challenging many of the norms of communication and family time. It gives an overview of the project development and the inclusion of theological reflection, a review of relevant literature along with the development and evaluation of the project intervention. Lastly, it provides a definition of many of the terms used in my project as well as gives a brief summary.

Description of the Ministry Context

The setting of this project is the Hendersonville Seventh-day Adventist Church, located in Hendersonville, NC. The Hendersonville Church is a church plant started from the parent Fletcher Seventh-day Adventist Church back in the 1920s. Today, it has grown to almost the same size as Fletcher. Hendersonville is one of six Adventist churches within a 15-mile radius. The large number of churches in this area can be attributed to the founding of Captain Gilmer Christian School, Fletcher Academy, and our local Adventist hospital that started in 1910, currently known as Park Ridge Health. Today there is also a large retirement community called Fletcher Park Inn that draws Adventists from around the country. All of these Adventist institutions are an easy seven-minute drive from the Hendersonville Church.

The 2019 membership of Hendersonville is 735 with about 320 in average attendance. The church is predominantly Caucasian, which reflects the greater community of Henderson County where 93% of the population are Caucasian. Every age range is well represented, including a good number of young families and retirees.

Personal History

When I started ministry in 2003, I did not have a mobile phone, but after a year of ministry, I purchased my first mobile phone. At that time, Blackberry devices were doing very well, but there was a tectonic shift in 2007 with the introduction of the first iPhone. With all that these new devices could do, it was clear that church work and family flexibility would be enhanced, as I would not have to be home to receive and reply to important emails, so I purchased my first “smartphone” in 2009. With all the functions at

my fingertips, I was instantly engrossed—to the frustration of my wife. I was constantly staring at this little device and became a slave to the pings and notifications that demanded my attention.

As the smartphone continued to build in popularity and usership, the way society communicated began to change. A watershed moment for me came over the holidays of 2013. I observed how five families spent considerable cost and effort to be together for the holidays. However, on multiple occasions, everyone could be seen in the living room—not talking, not getting caught up with life and how they were doing, but rather silently staring at their smartphones. Even at the dinner table, smartphones, tablets, even laptops would be out and would be in competition with the conversation. In the past, these had been times when we had stimulating and interesting conversation, but that part of our family togetherness seemed to have been hijacked by individual attention to devices. This was such a shift from even a few years earlier that my wife and I both had to talk about what we had seen. We discussed the implications of such a shift, and neither of us liked it.

Statement of the Problem

Within Hendersonville church families, young and old, there is increasing usage of mobile technology in the form of laptops, tablets, and especially smartphones. In recent years, I have observed changes in how families communicate, interact, and relate with one another. It seems the greatest impact of technology can be observed in families with children in junior high through college as this age group has adapted most quickly to mobile technology usage.

When I decided to take on this project, I was the Associate Pastor with an emphasis in youth and young families. This gave me an opportunity to see first-hand how mobile technology was impacting our young people, who are often the first-adopters of new technology.

On Sabbath morning, I observed the youth coming in to Sabbath School and immediately getting out their smartphones and assuming the familiar head-down position. To engage with them and compete with what was on their phone became a growing challenge. In cradle roll and kindergarten Sabbath School classes, parents were often sitting behind their children engrossed in their smartphones, or sending out the latest picture they just took. In church, people would be going to look up the Scripture text and get distracted texting.

As time went on, it became more and more apparent that the same frustrations our family had experienced in regard to distraction from worship, distraction from family communication, unfiltered access to media input of every type, excessive use, and irresponsible use could be seen on a larger scale in our congregation as well.

Statement of the Task

The task of this project was to develop, present, and evaluate a faith-based “mobile technology and the family” seminar at the Hendersonville Seventh-day Adventist Church. With nightly presentations, group interaction and discussions, along with practical suggestions over a five-week period, the goal was to create a greater awareness of the challenges that mobile technology presents and to move participants toward more responsible behavior with mobile devices. By conducting interviews before and after the

total seminar with the same set of questions, I was able to gauge the effectiveness of the seminar in producing these changes.

Delimitations and Limitations of the Project

This project was limited in many ways. First, I had a limited number of families to draw from that had small children and teenage children making a meaningful sample not possible. Secondly, attendance was not mandatory; I simply asked people if they would be willing to commit to all five nights and hope things did not come up that would prohibit them from attending. A third limitation was that, since it was a fairly, new issue there was a relatively small pool of literature available for study. With the release of the iPhone in 2007 the smartphone phenomenon began, and not until 2011 did 50% of the country have a smart phone. People were just starting to observe the trends, and write and publish on the subject. However, with the impacts I was observing, a much greater body of evidence and journal articles would likely emerge. With that in mind, this study serves as a snapshot of the mobile technology challenges from 2013 and 2017.

There were also a few delimitations. One was the very narrow scope of the project as it only evaluated a handful of Adventist families in one church in western North Carolina. Secondly, the families were hand-picked for research with variations in age, length of marriage, age of kids, and ethnicity. A third delimitation was that this seminar and gathered research did not look at results over an extended period of time, but was rather a quick snapshot. Fourth, everyone uses technology differently and has a different definition of what ideal usage looks like. While I gave participants information to process, I did not seek to give specific parameters of ideal usage as every user and family

make up is different. I wanted individuals to set their own limits based on principles and information rather than feeling as if limits were being imposed on them.

Description of the Project Process

Theological Reflection

One of the first principles in Scripture that relates to this topic is one of rest. From the very beginning, we see God putting a high priority on rest and the institution of the Sabbath—a memorial in time in which human could commune with God, rest in their relationship with Him, and pull back from the daily demands of life. In the Gospels we see Jesus inviting His disciples to come apart and rest in a quiet place (Mark 6:31). Secondly, we are challenged in Scripture to have self-control (Gal 5:23) and to control our spirit (Prov 16:3). To have self-control means to abstain from certain behaviors and practices. A third principle is that of the value of our time and how we spend it (John 9:4). Once lost, time cannot be recovered. Fourth, Scripture speaks of testing everything and holding that which is good (1 Thess 5:21) and gives us a standard with which to test all things (Phil 4:8). A fifth principle is that of taking responsibility in relationships (Deut 6:6-9) and the parents' role to correct and guide their children (Prov 23:13). Lastly, we see in many places the idea of guarding one's senses and turning away from things that are harmful (Job 31:1). By more deeply exploring these biblical principles one can find much to inform the discussion on mobile technology and how it is used.

Review of Literature

As previously stated, literature pertaining to the impacts of mobile technology was just starting to emerge as I began this project. Some authors had been speaking to the dangers of screen time and the Internet, but having a screen available anywhere and anytime through smartphones was a relatively new phenomenon. All the information fell in two distinct categories. The first category focused on all the benefits of mobile technology and how it was improving our life, work flexibility, communication, convenience, and even re-training our brain to be more efficient and productive. The second category of research was contradictory to the first and was arguing that mobile technology lead to more shallow thinking, constant distraction, and superficial communication. There was also literature describing negative impacts on children and how it was robbing young children of their parents' attention and eye contact. These two themes emerged in relationship books, parenting books, online articles and from psychologists. Some of the most recent information I obtained while preparing to deliver the actual seminar in the fall of 2017, and can be found in the appendix. Some marked studies had emerged that I cited in my presentation showing that internet addiction is very similar to cocaine addiction (Huddleston, 2016). Another study showed links between a 50% increase in depression and the smartphone becoming mainstream in this country (Carlson, 2017).

Development of the Intervention

As noted earlier, the project was an outgrowth of my own experience with my immediate and extended family experience with mobile technology and how it was impacting our face-to-face interactions with one another. My own experience led me to

observe similar behaviors within my congregation. It became apparent in the literature review that this was a significant and growing problem. The more I studied the literature and reflected on the biblical principles that could be applied to mobile technology use, the more I felt compelled to communicate this to my local church in a way that was relevant, biblical, balanced, interactive, and practical. I wanted to teach in a way that was interactive and provided feedback from the participants. Having the seminar in our fellowship hall with the participants seated at round tables seemed like a natural forum to share information, discuss, and learn together about how to best interact with mobile technology in ways that would honor God. Around this idea, I developed five major themes to cover over a period of five nights, once a week. The information from pre- and post-interviews with a number of families was a way to measure the seminar's effectiveness, with the goal of raising awareness to move the needle in a positive direction based on self-identified difficulties they were experiencing.

Implementation of the Intervention

Prior to the Media and the Family Seminar, I advertised in our church bulletin, from the front on Sabbath morning, and in our church newsletter about the upcoming seminar. All were invited to attend and child care for younger children was provided. I selected ten or more families and asked the parents to attend all the seminars and participate in the pre- and post-interviews. Teen children were welcome to attend if they like, but none did so. We began each night with a light supper on a donation basis. They would go through line and then sit at various round tables in the room and after a about 30 minutes I would go directly into the seminar. Each seminar had Keynote slides consisting of quotes, graphs, studies, pictures, or questions for the groups to discuss at

their tables. After the table discussions, I would ask each group to share their insights with the larger group. Each night there was a nightly challenge in which they were to try something new in the upcoming week. The following week, we would take some time to hear reports on how the challenge went. What worked well? What was challenging? What was helpful? Was it frustrating? Did you learn anything from it? At the conclusion of the five-part seminar I conducted the post-interviews with the families that faithfully attended all the seminars, which was eight out of the original 11 families. It was my hope that at least 2/3 of the families that committed would be able to attend all five sessions and that was the case. I used the same questions for the post-interview as were used in the pre-interview so I could gauge if the seminar changed their responses in any way. My interpretation of the data and my conclusions from the data and project as a whole are provided in Chapter 6.

Interviewing and evaluating the various families as part of the intervention required establishing a research purpose. I decided to explore mobile technology's impact on relational intimacy within families of the Hendersonville Seventh-day Adventist Church. A qualitative case study was created and questions were crafted, many of which were open-ended and allowed participants to speak freely in specific areas. Some quantitative data was presented, but not many quantitative studies had been done in this area.

All selected participants chose to participate in the research by signing an informed consent form before the pre-interview. The data collected was kept confidential on a password protected computer to ensure the privacy of the participants as well as the responses to the questions. The data included notes from the pre- and post-interviews of

each family, and couples were interviewed together. With the questions for the pre- and post-interview remaining the same, I simply needed to compare their answers to see if the seminar moved the needle in a positive direction. Chapter 6 presents the positive changes made.

Definition of Terms

While most of these terms are common in our present age, a definition is provided as to their use in this paper. Some of these terms seem to morph over time, thus the following definitions will give greater clarity as to their understood meaning at the time of writing.

App is an accepted abbreviation for the term *application*, which refers to a computer program that can be downloaded and installed on a mobile device (Cherner, 2014).

Facebook is a social networking site also known as social media. This online site provides a platform where users can have social interactions through writing, pictures and videos with those who share similar interests and are tagged as *friends* (Aydin, 2012).

Facebook Friend is someone who is added to an individual's network on a social media website and may or may not be someone whom they have ever met or interacted with other than requesting that he or she be added to their network (Shear, 2010).

Mobile device is any digital device that is easily transportable and has a connection with the Internet and or telephone. Such devices include: smartphones, tablets, or laptops (Ciampa, 2013).

Mobile Technology refers to devices that are both portable and offer instant access to a host of information (Coates, 2009). Examples would be the laptop, tablet, and

smartphone primarily. Mobile technology allows the user to do a variety of tasks such as telephone, email, play music, video, take and send pictures, GPS navigation just to name a few (Akkerman, 2011). In addition to its advantageous size and convenience, the technology permits multiple tasks such as note taking, telephone, email, music, video/audio recording, picture taking and GPS navigation (Akkerman & Filius, 2011). When contrasted with traditional computers, the most obvious but significant difference is that mobile technology can be taken anywhere and is much easier and convenient for the user (Carillo, 2011).

Smartphone is a handheld, mobile, computing device that has the ability to perform various functions such as make telephone calls, connect to the Internet through wireless and cellular connection known as data, as well as download and run various applications known as apps that can do any number of things (Milrad, 2007).

Social Media is understood as technology that allows individuals to share, create, collaborate, and network with one another (Woodley, 2014), and includes things such as, but not limited to, wall posting, blogs, wikis, social networking, social bookmarking, and video sharing (Poellhuber, 2011).

Summary

This chapter has offered a concise introduction of some of the unmet challenges that mobile technology poses regarding family and relational intimacy. In a limited way, this study focused on addressing some of the challenges within the local church context and provided practical ways to empower families to make more informed decisions on how they interact with mobile technology. It was my hope that this ministry project

would encourage an ongoing conversation within families as well as in our churches as how to rightly balance technology in daily, family life.

CHAPTER 2

BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS

Like many others, Seventh-day Adventist families in the Hendersonville, North Carolina area are experiencing increased use of mobile technology—tablets, laptop computers and cellular phones. The current project was designed to enable our church families to clarify their values with respect to investment of time and money on this technology, as well as discern its impact on crucial aspects of personal spiritual development and relationship intimacy.

This chapter shows some guiding principles in Scripture and the writings of Ellen White that help families navigate this topic. One may be quick to ask how the Bible speaks to the issue of mobile technology at all. While it is obvious that mobile technology is not found in Scripture, there are plenty of biblical principles that relate to personal spiritual life and relationship intimacy. At the heart of this issue is something that really has little to do with technology, but a lot to do with principles for guiding and guarding relationships. Scripture has much to say about the latter. Unless indicated, I will be referencing the King James Version.

The first biblical principle this chapter will address is the principle of *rest*. This speaks directly to the lure of mobile technology to work from anywhere, to be available 24/7, and to always have sensory input bombarding our consciousness. Yet in Scripture we find the principle of rest. Jesus Himself gives the call to come apart and rest awhile (Mark 6:31). He recognizes the need to come apart from the everyday and find rest, not

just physically, but to have time away from the grind to invest relationally, with God, with one's spouse, and/or children.

The second biblical principle being considered is that of self-control and temperance. Paul speaks of the value of temperance in all things (1 Cor 9:25). Anything taken to excess is not healthy. Balance is called for in all things.

The third biblical principle being considered is the stewardship of one's time and our accountability before God in how one makes use of their time (John 9:4). Mobile technology has a way of demanding one's attention and sucking them in. More than ever before, technology is demanding our time and attention through social media, gaming, texts, emails, and news. Without even realizing it, huge amounts of time can be lost.

The fourth biblical principle this chapter addresses is the necessity to test all things and keep what is good (1 Thess 5:21). There are many ways mobile technology can improve relationships, draw families closer and help them communicate better. Many things are not inherently good or bad, but their goodness or badness is determined by how they are used.

The final biblical principle this chapter speaks to is the need to take responsibility in relationships. Technology can too easily become a means of escaping present reality, or a means to avoid an uncomfortable situation. But the Bible is clear that in marriage, parenting and friendships we need to exhibit responsible caring that attends to relationship needs (Deut 6:6-9). We must not only attend to our own needs, but also those needs of the other—be it a spouse, child, family member, or friend. Through the study of each of these passages in greater depth, the reader will receive practical principles for

making sound choices in regards to mobile technology and its proper place within the family.

The Principle of Rest

The disciples had been with Jesus for over a year, and were sent out two by two to preach, cast out demons, and heal the sick. While they were away, John the Baptist was beheaded. This was a significant blow to the disciples and they came back to Jesus to report all that had happened. Jesus responds by saying, “Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while” (Mark 6:31).

Later, Jesus leads Peter, James, and John up the mountain to be alone and pray (Mark 9:2). Again in Mark chapter 14, Jesus retreats in order to spend some time in prayer and asks the disciples to do the same (Mark 14:34). We get the sense that it was Jesus’ custom to pull away and rest often. Vincent (1887, p. 175) observes that in the book of Mark, there are eleven occasions where “Jesus retired from his work, in order to escape his enemies or to pray in solitude, for rest, or for private conference with his disciples.” If rest was something of importance in Jesus time, how much more in the age of cell phones pinging for our attention?

Why “Come Apart”?

To put it simply, in order for rest to occur, one must “Come ye yourselves apart” (Mark 6:31). The passage can be translated in various ways. In the *New King James Version* it says, “come aside by yourselves.” The *New Living Translation* says, “Let’s go off by ourselves,” while the *New International Version* says, “Come with me by yourselves.” In Luke’s account the wording is, “He took them, and went aside privately”

(Luke 9:10). But where were they going? To a “deserted place” (NKJV), to an “isolated place” (LEB), to a “quiet place” (NLT).

Why was it necessary to come apart? The last half of verse 31 in Mark chapter 6 tells us. It was because of the constant press of the people. The demands of ministry had become so great, “they had no leisure so much as to eat.” The disciples were depleted and Jesus encouraged them to come apart and have some private time in a deserted, isolated, quiet place.

Jesus knows that physical as well as mental rest comes best in a quiet place away from the constant demands and challenges of ministry. Mental and physical rest are difficult if not impossible to find in a crowded, busy, noisy environment. Yet for one to serve well, finding a quiet, deserted, isolated place is not simply a good idea, but is required for survival. Jesus knew this when “in the morning, rising up a great while before day, He went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed” (Mark 1:35). This was Jesus’ lifeline and He knew it could not be accomplished through multitasking or in the midst of a pressing crowd, but rather could only be found in a “solitary place.” How much more is this needed in our multitask-frenzied world of mobile technology and 24/7 availability?

Psalms 46 also addresses this idea of pulling away. Verse 1 begins with “God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.” The psalm continues by giving reasons for assurance in God and then challenges the reader in verse 10 to, “Be still and know that I am God.” The term for “be still” in the original literally means “to release” or “let go” (Barry, Heiser, Custis, Mangum, & Whitehead, 2012). One must escape the whirlwind to better hear the voice of God. One must “let go” of all the stresses and

demands of life and find that still, quiet place to hear God's voice. "We must individually hear Him speaking to the heart. When every other voice is hushed, and in quietness we wait before Him, the silence of the soul makes more distinct the voice of God" (White, 1940, p. 363). In our technological age, silence can be a rare commodity.

Even Solomon extols the importance of coming apart to a quiet place when he says, "Better is an handful with quietness, than both the hands full with travail and vexation of spirit" (Eccl 4:6). The verse tells us that one is better off with only one hand of quietness, or peace of mind, than to have two hands full because of nervous rushing about. Peace of mind, rest, and quietness, is shown to have greater value than a chasing after things or accomplishments.

The Sabbath Rest

This coming apart is essential, but not the goal. To show us the importance of rest, God models it at the conclusion of the creation week (Gen 2:3). This is not because God is physically tired (Isa 40:28). No, God rests because He values relationship. So God created the Sabbath, and "blessed" and "sanctified" the seventh day as a "time and space for holiness and communion" (*Andrews Study Bible*, 2010, p. 8). On Sabbath we rest in God, in our relationship, in our communion with the divine.

Therefore, the Sabbath rest that God calls one to is not simply for physical or mental rest, but for a relational connection and communion with the almighty, all powerful presence of God. That is why I like how the New International Version translates Mark 6:31, "Come with me by yourselves" because it highlights the idea that we are not simply to come apart to participate in a hobby that we enjoy, but to commune and be refreshed in the presence of the almighty, God of the universe. This is the idea

highlighted in Exodus 33:14 where God says, “My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest.” Notice in this passage that the rest is coming from being in God’s presence. He is the one who gives rest. “I will satisfy the weary” (Jer 31:25, NRSV).

Yet, God knew that pulling apart from all the goals and tasks would be difficult. So, from the beginning He instituted the Sabbath, not as a suggestion, not only with the word “remember,” but as a command. “The seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work” (Exod 20:8-10). Everyone in one’s household or business or influence must rest (Exod 20:10). This rest is so important that it comes with the force of a command.

But at the core of coming apart and resting is not simply avoiding problems, issues, or gaining physical or mental rest. While it includes those things, at its deepest level it is about spending time in communion with our heavenly Father. Jesus said, “Come to Me, all ye who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls” (Matt 11:28-30). True rest for our souls is only found in Jesus. “Worry is blind, and cannot discern the future; but Jesus sees the end from the beginning. In every difficulty He has His way prepared to bring relief” (White, 1940, p. 330).

For many, the idea of rest simply means to have time to relax and enjoy looking at their device. It is not uncommon to observe families in the evening all on their respective devices. Granted, they may be doing constructive things, but as scripture has shown, this is not rest as God intended. While being on our devices might feel like rest, it actually is having the opposite effect of what God offers us. There must be times in the day, as well as on the Sabbath, at week’s end, where we come apart, even from our devices and seek

true, divine rest. “God’s love has set a limit to the demands of toil. Over the Sabbath He places His merciful hand. In His own day He preserves for the family opportunity for communion with Him, with nature, and with one another” (White, 1903, p. 250).

The Principle of Self-Control

Another aspect that comes into play with a topic such as mobile technology is in the realm of self-control. How one uses the technology in front of them has a crucial impact on one’s spouse and children and all significant relationships. Is a smartphone serving the individual, or is the individual serving the smartphone? Either is a real possibility and depends fully on the user and his or her ability to assert self-control over the situation.

Proverbs 25:28 states, “He that hath no rule over his own spirit is like a city that is broken down, and without walls.” In ancient times it was the wall that protected the city. In a like manner, the Bible writer is saying that ruling one’s spirit is protection from enemies and those seeking to do one harm. It is stated similarly in Proverbs 16:32, “He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city.” To take a city would be seen by most as an incredible feat of bravery and valor. Yet here it is said that one is even greater when able to control their spirit or be self-controlled. What walls of protection need to be made around our mobile technology?

In Galatians, we read about the fruits of the spirit, and one of which is self-control (Gal 5:23, NKJV). The word for “self-control” is ἐγκράτεια and involves setting and maintaining boundaries around oneself, delaying gratification, learning to wait, and exercising restraint and can mean both abstinence in some things and moderation in others (Vincent, 1887).

White (2001) tells us, “Strength of character consists of two things—power of will and power of self-control” (p. 161), and she also says that the first thing to teach any child is self-control. Self-control is at the core of who we are and our character. White (1940) states, “The highest evidence of nobility in a Christian is self-control” (p. 301). “An ordinary mind, well disciplined, will accomplish more and higher work than will the most highly educated mind and the greatest talents without self-control” (White, 2003, p. 335). The question one could ask is how many individuals exercise this type of self-control with their smartphones? Across America, one can observe people sit down at restaurants, not talking, but staring at their devices.

Several people in the Bible are praised for their self-control. One such instance is that of Joseph. Scripture tells us that Joseph was put in charge of everything Potiphar had (Gen 39:4), was very attractive (Gen 39:6), young (Gen 37:2), and was pursued by Potiphar’s wife in an aggressive fashion (Gen 39:7). I would presume given Potiphar’s status and great wealth, that she would have had the most fashionable clothing and accessories and was probably a very attractive woman. Yet Joseph was resolved in his response and said, “how then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God”? (v. 9). As she continued to pursue Joseph day after day, he refused her. “[He] hearkened not unto her, to lie by her, or to be with her” (v. 10).

Now the word for “hearkened” is שָׁמַע and is often translated “to hear,” “listen” or “obey” (Brown, Driver, & Briggs, 1977, p. 1033). So Joseph not only refuses to sleep with her, but he refuses to listen to her or even be with her. Here we are given some biblical insight on what self-control or temperance looks like. Do not linger! Do not entertain thoughts, conversation, or even be in the presence of someone who is tempting.

Eventually Potiphar's wife creates a situation where all the servants are sent out of the house and "she caught him by his garment, saying, Lie with me: and he left his garment in her hand, and fled, and got him out" (Gen 39:12). The Hebrew word for "caught" is שָׁפַח and can also be translated "seize" or "capture" (Brown et al., 1977, p. 1074) and can imply violence. The same word is used in Proverbs 7:13 in which a married woman seduces a young man and he falls and is described as "as an ox goeth to the slaughter" (v. 22). Yet rather than linger, entertain, or even debate with her, Joseph runs away!

In the account of Joseph, self-control is depicted in several specific ways. First, Joseph is resolved to follow and honor God. He makes a choice to honor God in all of his life experiences. That is the basis of all his decisions. Secondly, he refuses to linger in any tempting situation or even be near the temptation. We see Joseph do this by avoidance when possible, but in drastic situations he physically runs away! Joseph is a wonderful example of one who is not swayed by circumstances but is rather controlled by the precepts of God.

Daniel is another great example of self-control. Upon his capture he was privileged to take "daily provision of the king's meat, and of the wine which he drank" (Dan 1:5). What an honor, especially as a foreigner, to be able to eat from the king's table! Yet much of the food was not good for Daniel and would not honor God. Daniel "purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself" (Dan 1:8). Daniel determined, he decided, he made up his mind that whatever he would eat, or drink, that it would be to the glory of God (cf. 1 Cor 10:31). He was resolved to "abstain from every form of evil" (cf. 1 Thess 5:22).

Self-control requires that one decide *before* the situation arises. To be resolved in reason and purpose rather than driven by impulses, emotions, or desires. “The approval of God was dearer to him than the favor of the most powerful earthly potentate—dearer than life itself. He determined to stand firm in his integrity, let the result be what it might” (White, 1917, p. 483). What an example of self-discipline, resolve, and a commitment to the Lord.

Conversations need to be had with our spouses and families. We must decide how our devices will be used before the situation arises. Is it ok to answer a phone call during family worship? Are there tech free zones or times? Like Joseph, we need intentionality and accountability regarding how we use our mobile technology. Like Daniel, we need resolve and commitment in regard to technology. Use is not necessarily bad, but overuse is. The principle of self-control is the wall of protection that keeps us in check.

The Principle of Stewardship

The third biblical principle that addresses the issues raised by modern technology is that of stewardship. Distractions cause one to not only lose focus, but also to waste precious time. Jesus said, “I must work the works of Him who sent Me while it is day; the night is coming when no one can work” (John 9:4). Like Jesus, our time is limited and we must work while it is day, while we have opportunity. Divine appointments often come once. “The value of time is beyond computation. Time squandered can never be recovered” (White, 2001, p. 123). Time with our children, time with our spouse, time in conversation and being part of their daily lives cannot be cashed in at a later time. To miss big family events, birthdays, anniversaries, and ball games is something that cannot be relived at another time.

Moments squandered can never be recovered. It is wrong not to make good use of the time we have been given. One must ask the Lord to “teach us to number our days” (Ps 90:12), and even our hours and minutes. One must be a good steward of time, a most precious commodity. Mobile technology can certainly save time, but it can also be a huge time waster.

“Satan well knows that all whom he can lead to neglect prayer and the searching of the Scriptures, will be overcome by his attacks. Therefore he invents every possible device to engross the mind” (White, 1911b, p. 519). In a day of every kind of mobile technology, it is interesting the author would use the word “device” when speaking of distractions and things to “engross the mind.” With the constant pings, social media, text messages, and emails one may simply be reacting to life instead of approaching each day with purpose and meaning based on what is most important and of greatest value in the sight of God and one’s spouse and/or children.

“It is wrong to waste our time, wrong to waste our thoughts. We lose every moment that we devote to self-seeking” (White, 1905, p. 208). How often could this statement apply to those staring at their smart phones, posting pictures of themselves, or trying to maintain the high score in a video game against friends?

Today one wields more power in one’s hands than ever before. Power to chat, call, take and send pictures, scan and share documents, watch videos, shop, get directions, make reservations—the possibilities are endless. It can often begin with the simple thought, “I know there must be an app for that,” or “I could ask Google.” Mobile technology is available 24/7 and can be helpful in so many ways that if restraint is not exercised, face-to-face relationships can suffer.

The Principle of Holding on to the Good

The fourth biblical principle regarding mobile technology is to “test all things; hold fast that which is good” (1 Thess 5:21) Is mobile technology inherently evil? No. There are numerous ways that technology is being used to spread the gospel. Yet, an equally long list could be made for ways that mobile technology is having a negative impact on the furtherance of the gospel. Just like money, it can be used for good, or for evil. The key is how it is used. The same can be said for mobile technology. Mobile technology provides 24-7 access to all types of movies and music. One challenge of the user is certainly the question, what guides user’s decision-making in whether to view or listen to various selections?

Test all Things

What does scripture mean when it tells us to “Test all things” (1 Thess 5:21)? While the context is speaking in terms of prophecy, it can apply to the present discussion of mobile technology and its effects upon our spiritual lives and relationships. It would stand to reason that if Paul is asking one to test the spirit of prophecy, certainly nothing should be left without testing. We must test *all* things. The verb translated “test” is “δοκιμάζω” which is used often in the New Testament in the sense of putting to the test, evaluating, proving, or examining things or people (Kim, 2014). This is the same idea found in 1 John 4:1 (NKJV) when it says, “Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God.” In White’s (1911a, p. 263) comment on this text she said, “he enjoined a careful discrimination in distinguishing the false from the true.”

The Bible gives several guides one can use when putting things to the test. Philippians 4:8 has always been a gold standard, “whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things.” That is quite a litmus test. To live right, one must think right. To meditate means to think carefully about or consider something. Paul is calling all to meditate on things that are true in the fullest sense of the word. In essence, it is a call to an allegiance to God who is the truth (John 14:6). Is this activity worthy of one’s respect? Is it above any form of reproach? Is it commendable, and of moral excellence? In short, it is a call to focus one’s thoughts and attention on Christ and things compatible with His character.

So much of the media today focuses almost exclusively on things that are false, unprincipled, unfair, impure in thought, desire, motive, and often sexually impure. Yet God is calling His followers to “dwell on the fine, good things in others. Think about all you can praise God for and be glad about” (Taylor, 1997, p. 94). It is a call to a shift one’s thinking and one’s focus. It is a change of mindset. “For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit” (Rom 8:5).

From this list one may need to make a firm decision to not do certain things, go certain places, or entertain certain thoughts. One such example we find in Job 31:1 where Job states very plainly, “I have made a covenant with my eyes; why then should I look upon a young woman?” Here Job is making a solemn promise to himself not to look in a lustful way at young woman that would suggest impure thoughts. He is asserting himself

to avoid the lusts of the flesh (1 John 2:16) in a very practical way. It sounds very much like the modern idea of bouncing the eyes and avoiding the second look associated with desire and lust (Alterman, Stoeker, & Yorkey, 2000).

Later in the chapter Job states that “If my heart has been enticed by a woman, or if I have lurked at my neighbor’s door, then let my wife grind for another” (Job 31:9). Too many today “lurk” in a variety of ways using media. For some it is late night television, surfing the web, or social media. Whatever the avenue, mobile technology allows one to have 24/7 access, to “lurk” at their neighbor’s door and behold things in a private setting that often allow and suggest impure thoughts. Yet God calls us to make a covenant with our eyes, with our smartphones, with our Internet and media consumption. To focus our minds on things that are pure, noble, and of good report. To test *all* things.

This idea of evaluating and examining things and situations is not just in the realm of good or bad, black or white. It can also help one prioritize and decipher between what is good, and what is better. In Luke we find such a story. Jesus was welcomed into Martha’s home, and she was feverishly doing all she could to be a good hostess, while her sister Mary sat content at Jesus’ feet and listened to His words. The Bible puts it this way, “Martha was distracted with much serving” (Luke 10:40). So Martha asked Jesus to tell Mary to come and help. Jesus reply was simple, “Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things; But . . . Mary hath chosen that good part” (vv. 41, 42).

It is a well-known story, but makes a very clear point. There is nothing inherently wrong with hosting, with preparing food, making sure there are enough chairs and place settings. The point is that some things are more important and of greater significance. Martha was distracted with serving those around her. Today, the temptation is to always

be engaged with one's smartphone rather than being fully engaged in the present situation. "Satan's influence is constantly exerted upon men to distract the senses" (White, 1940, p. 341). Emails and texts are being responded to, fulfilling deadlines and answering questions, but there is a real possibility that one can become distracted from the thing that is of greater importance. Ponder how incongruous the following examples are: married couples enjoying a nice dinner over candlelight and backlit screens or children at a playground hoping for their parents' attention and involvement when all the while the parents' eyes are "distracted with much serving" upon their device.

The story of Jesus' interaction with Mary and Martha teaches us that the focus of one's attention is of great importance and something we must always be aware of. Preparing food, setting the table, smartphones and laptops all have their appropriate place, but one must always be aware of that place and the temptation for them to take precedence over the face-to-face interactions that are crucial to relationship. Therefore, the challenge is to test all things, all situations, and all persons vying for one's attention at any given minute of the day.

Keep What is Good

So, what is the answer? Certainly, one can think of many ways that smartphones and mobile technology improve our lives and help us stay more connected. The ability to work from anywhere can be a blessing, but it can also be a curse. How is one to find the appropriate balance?

The second half of 1 Thessalonians 5:21 gives insight into these questions, "Test all things; hold fast what is good." Do not throw out the baby with the bathwater; test all things and hold on, keep, retain those things that are good. Mobile technology must be

made to serve the individual in a healthy way, rather than the individual serving the technology. There is much to be gained that is positive through mobile technology in regards to staying in closer contact with one's family, with friends, and a host of resources that make one more productive, effective, and spiritual.

One positive aspect of mobile technology is in its ability to help one fill their minds with scripture and God's Word. "I will meditate on Your precepts, and contemplate Your ways" (Ps 119:15). Computers allow one to more quickly and thoroughly study the Bible through programs such as *Accordance*, *BibleWorks*, or *Logos Bible Software* to name a few. These are powerful tools that not only allow one to fit a huge library in their pocket, but enable one to do powerful searches and look through dozens of resources in a fraction of the time it would take to find, open, and read in hard copy. Further, many of these tools sync with smartphones and tablets allowing one to take their study notes, thoughts, and highlights with them.

Beyond Bible study tools, there are apps for smartphones, such as *Scripture Typer*, which provide assistance with Bible memorization. Marriage and family enrichment books can be listened to on-the-go. Sermons can be live streamed or downloaded with apps such as *Audioverse*. Of course, all of this is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. One can follow the advice of Joshua to not depart from God's law but to "meditate therein day and night, . . . for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous" (Josh 1:8). As one meditates on God's Word, His law, and His character, God promises that one will be blessed (Rom 8:7-14).

At the present time, there are more ways to meditate and fill our minds with and have access to scripture than ever before. "Oh, how I love Your law! It is my meditation

all the day” (Ps 119:97). However, it is apparent that with the development of very powerful mobile technology to be used in drawing us to the Lord, the devil has not missed his opportunity by any means to distract and occupy the mind and one’s time like never before. Therefore, the clarion call is to test all things and keep what is good.

The Principle of Taking Responsibility in Relationships

In the book of Deuteronomy there are many profound teachings regarding the divine-human relationship. One of these is the idea that God’s law is not arbitrary, nor merely exists to show God’s power and authority. Rather we see demonstrated that God’s law is given as a guide for His people and a means to bring about favorable results and happiness. In Deuteronomy chapter 6, God’s people are challenged to “fear the LORD your God, to keep all His statutes and His commandments,” and the text emphasizes that this is for “you and your son and your grandson, all the days of your life, and that your days may be prolonged” (Deut 6:2). This passage highlights that the Lord wants to bless us, our children, and grandchildren through the principles and direction found in the commandments and statutes of God. In our day and age, parental responsibility must reach into the realm of mobile technology.

Further, in the polytheistic culture of the surrounding nations, there is a reminder that “The Lord our God, the Lord *is* one” (Deut 6:4)! This was a foundation of the Hebrews’ belief that there is only one true God. Twice Paul asserts this very thing as a tenant of Christianity (1 Cor 8:4-6; Eph 4:4-6). Then we have a verse that Jesus Himself quoted (Matt 22:37), that “you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength” (Deut 6:5). This is at the core of all we do as

Christians—to live fully, unashamedly, without reservation and give our all to the Lord Jesus Christ.

The focus for our study comes into view as the passage shows the importance as well as practical insight as how one can pass these timeless and foundational truths on to one's children.

And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. 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. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates. (Deut 6:6-9)

There is much here that deserves our attention.

Spiritual Instruction of Children at Home

First of all, we need to recognize that this call is not directed toward school teachers, Sabbath school teachers, pastors, or elders, but rather to *parents* and how they are to relate to their children. Each of the other categories of people may play a part in the process, but the responsibility and greatest effectiveness fully and squarely relies on the parents. In reference to Deuteronomy 6:7, White (1980) says, “Teach the Scriptures to your children yourselves” (White, 1980, p. 211). Parents are also the acting agents of Proverbs 22:6 which says, “Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.” The point seems unequivocally clear, “Parents, . . . you are responsible for the lives and souls of your children” (White, 2001, p. 474).

Something else that jumps out at us in Deuteronomy 6:6 is that which God has commanded “shall be in your heart.” Parents cannot teach and impart that which they do not themselves possess or understand. For one to effectively teach that there is only one true God, and that His commandments are given to us in love and for our happiness and

that we should love Him with all of our soul, heart, and mind—for that to be taught effectively, a parent must first be fully convinced and surrendered in their own mind and heart. In Jesus’s parable of the blind leading the blind, He summarized by saying, “out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks” (Luke 6:45). To impart biblical principles to one’s children, these truths must first live in the heart of the parent.

In Deuteronomy 6:7 the parents are told to “teach them diligently,” by talking about the things of God when one sits, walks, lies down, or gets up. In essence, the instruction is to keep these things ever before one’s children. What does that look like? How does one do this successfully? Again, the text provides us with many insights.

One essential is that time must be invested. The text does not simply talk about taking this time once a week at church, or even once a day, but rather when one gets up in the morning, before one goes to bed at night, during the commute and while sitting in the living room or at the kitchen table. This text is calling Christian parents to always be mindful of the spiritual dimension of life and to regularly and faithfully weave the instruction about God and spiritual things into the fabric of family activity. “Parents should allow *nothing* to prevent them from giving to their children all the time that is necessary to make them understand what it means to obey and trust the Lord fully” (White, 2001, p. 474). The italics are mine, but that is strong language to say that “nothing” should ever stand in the way or prevent a parent from this duty and sacred trust. Again we read, “Those who have children should so manage their domestic and business affairs that *nothing* may come in between them and the children that would lessen the parents’ influence in directing them to Christ” (White, 2001, pp. 474-475).

Again, the italics are mine. Whether it is things at home, things at work, or eyes glued to a screen, *nothing* should stand in the way of the parent pointing children to Christ.

Morning and Evening Worship

Also mentioned in the passage is taking time each morning and each evening for worship. “In every Christian home God should be honored by the morning and evening sacrifices of prayer and praise” (White, 1913, p. 110). This is most often known as morning and evening worship. These times should be brief, varied, engaging all ages with illustrations and questions, and be viewed as the sweetest and most helpful part of one’s day (White, 1903). Young and old love and can comprehend and apply the varied stories throughout Scripture such as the stories of Noah, Joseph, Moses, Joshua, David, Daniel, Peter, James, and John. “In these simple stories may be made plain the great principles of the law of God” (White, 1913, p. 181). During worship, sing songs of praise to God. “Come into his presence with singing” (Ps 100:2)! Moses instructed the children of Israel to put the words of the law to music (Deut 31:19). White (1946) suggests that music is a great way to memorize the law of God and plant it in the minds of our children. Having morning and evening worship together as a family can be challenging as one’s children grow up and becomes impossible when they leave the home, but even then, one can share studied Bible passages or inspiring sermons through regular conversation. One can simply provide a link or take and send a picture. Morning and evening worship can vary greatly, but the practice is key to teaching and empowering our children for Jesus Christ.

Deuteronomy 6:7 not only alludes to family worship, but an ongoing communication with one’s children. It may be about school, work, relationships, or any

host of things, but keeping that line of communication open is crucial. A parent can bring the conversation back to God's Word and engage in one's children in such a way that gets them thinking about things in a spiritual line. One must not do their thinking for them, but rather inform the conversation in biblical ways that perhaps the children have not thought of. One's children should always feel comfortable and safe talking to their parents. This is not automatic but takes intentional time invested in the relationship.

In Matthew 19:14 Jesus said, "Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them." I do not think the children would have rushed to be near Him if He had not interacted with them at some point before. There was something about Jesus that was safe, caring, and inviting. This needs to be the experience of parents with their children. "Parents should encourage their children to confide in *them*, and unburden to them their heart griefs, their little daily annoyances and trials. Thus the parents can learn to sympathize with their children, and can pray with and for them that God would shield and guide them" (White, 1855, p. 391).

This is God's ideal. Yet, if that does not exist, the devil is quick to swoop in and work to make children feel more comfortable talking with young friends with little experience who laugh and joke about things, and never include a spiritual perspective and often give poor advice (White, 1855). What children really want is the love, approval and attention of their parents.

Guarding the Senses

In Deuteronomy 6:8 the Bible speaks of binding the law on one's hand and forehead. This was a symbolic reminder that some took literally as a sign of loyalty, or filter that everything done with their hands and mind must be in harmony and agreement

with the perfect law of God. In verse 9 it speaks of writing God's law on the doorposts and gate posts—the most common areas of life and daily living. Today we might say to put it on your bathroom mirror or refrigerator. All of this to encourage one to test all things as spoken of earlier. In this passage and in this context, I suggest that the call is for the parents to test all things in regards to themselves, but also their children. “Everything that can be done should be done to place ourselves and our children where we shall not see the iniquity that is practiced in the world. We should carefully guard the sight of our eyes and the hearing of our ears, so that these awful things shall not enter our minds” (White, 1980, p. 211). White goes on further to caution parents about the effects of the newspaper on children, because it reports on the most sinful and sensational things it can find. If that was the case 100 years ago, how much more today with media streaming into our smartphones, complete with video and images?

In every age, but especially ours, parents must take steps to guard what is seen and heard. The Internet can be good, but can also be a superhighway of filth streaming into our home. The parents must be informed and put in place boundaries, restrictions, and limits with the running thread of accountability to each other and to God. Violence and destructive practices occur because of what many in this nation and around the world are viewing and using to saturate their minds. All the while, parents are naive to think that they have no part in the solution as they hand their 13-year-old an unfiltered, unrestricted smartphone. Upon quoting Deuteronomy 6:6-8, White (1977, p. 567) speaks of a time when crime would be committed not just by adults, but by youth and children: “The evil condition of society exists because parents have disregarded this instruction and

neglected to train and educate their children to respect and honor the holy commandments of God.”

Guarding Against Parental Indulgence

Many parents today want to be their children’s best friend or buddy. They hesitate to hold their children up to the standard of God’s law. There is a reluctance to correct or reprove. Yet God’s word says, “Do not withhold correction from a child” (Prov 23:13), for “whom the Lord loves He chastens” (Heb 12:6), and in so doing “God deals with you as with sons” (v. 7). It is love that corrects, admonishes, and reproves.

Many children today are petted by their parents and given everything under the sun that is thought to give them happiness in the hopes that their children will like them. Thus children spend more time on devices and less time helping around the house. But children who are waited upon, have plenty of idle time, and are not required to work around the home become dependent and expect to be waited upon their entire lives. The description of the sin of Sodom is described as an “abundance of idleness” (Ezek 16:49). “Children thus indulged grow up unrestrained in their desires, unyielding in their dispositions, selfish, exacting, and overbearing, a curse to themselves and to all around them” (White, 1855, p. 393). Where does the fault lie? Much too often it lies with the parents that allow such idleness.

Conclusion

This chapter has shown, that as our Creator, God knew that humanity would need to rest, not just from our labors and cares, but most fully to rest in the presence of the almighty God of the universe. One's soul finds its deepest rest as it communes with God, and for this to take place effectively, one must pull back from work, school, stresses, and domestic responsibilities along with the distracting pings of our mobile devices. To be still and know that He is God might require a power-down.

To do this will certainly require a high level of self-control, pre-determined boundaries, and accountability; to not retreat from the challenges of life into the time-wasting traps of technology; to constantly evaluate how one is spending their time with technology and the impact it is having on their spouse or family; to test all things and only keep that which is good and uplifting; to recognize also, that even though the forms of technology might accomplish good things, it may be keeping one from something better—namely face-to-face interaction and uninterrupted time with one's spouse and family.

This chapter provided biblical principles to guide in putting mobile technology and technological devices in their proper place. As open dialogue occurs among families as to where the boundaries are, and as time is set aside for fully focused attention with those that mean most, then one's spiritual heritage can be passed down from parents to their children. Relationships are what ground us in life. We were made for relationship—primarily to be in relationship with God, then one's spouse, children, and beyond. The overarching question remains, how is mobile technology impacting those relationships?

Is it drawing in those most important relationships, or is it a driving wedge pushing them away? Both are possible, but only one will prevail.

May the Lord help us as we use the latest technology for His glory.

CHAPTER 3

LITERATURE REVIEW

The tidal wave of mobile technology has hit society in a way that has totally transformed how one communicates. Today an individual can be in constant communication with people around the world with a simple handheld device. Although mobile technology provides more ways to communicate, its use is not without problems, potential and real, to family relationships and personal spiritual discipline. Many of the families within the Hendersonville church give evidence of being absorbed with mobile technology, to the extent that their family dynamics are adversely affected. Parental responsibilities are being ignored and family ties are suffering through losses of time and attention caused by preoccupation with mobile technology devices.

This literature review will assist in the development of an educational seminar for the Hendersonville church that will highlight the challenges of mobile technology and ways of managing them, as well as seek to improve spiritual development and relational intimacy within the families of this congregation. Specifically, the literature review will look at the positive impacts of mobile technology on marriage and family through increased communication and work flexibility, as well as benefits that some have connected with the brain. It will also look at the negative impact of mobile technology on marriage and the family in areas such as being constantly distracted, claimed negative brain changes, the sabotage of nonverbal communication, false intimacy, and dangerous

health risks. The chapter will conclude by looking at implications of the literature published from 2005 to 2015.

Positive Impact of Mobile Technology on Marriage and Family Relationships

In the last several years, mobile technology such as laptops, tablets and especially smartphones, have revolutionized every part of life, from how we communicate to how we access music, video, news, weather, online banking, exercise, navigate, shop, and entertain ourselves. Today, any place will do, as long as we have an Internet connection (Turkle, 2011). The research indicates three major areas of benefit to mobile communication such as increased communication and emotional connection, increased work flexibility, and brain benefits from the use of modern technology.

Increased Communication and Emotional Connection

Various studies seem to make the same point that when couples or family members are apart, the Internet provides a way to stay connected and help them feel close (“Families using technology to remain close, study says,” 2008) as well as be able to stay informed of ever-changing schedules (Moscaritolo, 2012). Ribak (2009) speaks of how mobile phones give parents peace of mind and allow children and teenagers greater freedom as a result.

Hart and Frejd (2013), Hertlein and Blumer (2013) and McGee (2013) all make the same point that communication is the most basic building block of human connection. With communication comes feelings of intimacy and closeness. Therefore, the conclusion is that mobile technology is merely another channel through which to maintain relationships and enhance communication. However, while I do not disagree with their

position regarding communication, the problem is when that form of constant communication is opened up to the world, thus crowding out those relationships that are most important. Samakow (2012, Mar 19) shows that teens see texting as the number one method to communicate. Without proper parameters, could not this interrupt family time?

Studies cited by Mori and Harada (2010) speak to the benefits of mobile technology on older generations for their ease of communicating. Now, mobile devices can be customized with larger type, voice commands, and greater ease of overall use. Mobile technology allows older and perhaps retired people to connect with society to the same degree, a phenomenon that was not really possible ten years ago (Kraut, Brynin, Kiesler, & ebrary Inc., 2006).

Internet social media giant Facebook is constantly promoting the number of benefits available to those who go online. Facebook seems to have connected the world with 1.35 billion users worldwide after just 10 years (Grossman, 2014). There are “6 billion likes posted to Facebook every day” (Roberts, 2014, p. 90). Facebook changed “friend” to the verb “to friend” and brought us to the place “where not using Facebook can be a social handicap” (Bauerlein, 2011, p. 173). It is also sobering to think that 85% of humans on the planet are within range of a cell tower. Zuckerberg, Facebook founder, chairman, and CEO, is now looking for ways to get every person on the planet online in the next 10 years (Grossman, 2014). Why the push for Internet for all? It could very well have something to do with the fact that “the average internet consumer spends 70 percent of their time building their personal relationships” (Gallo, 2011, p. 9).

With social media’s entrance into the world scene, isolated and often marginalized people groups are now able to communicate, parents can connect with teens

studying abroad, pictures and experiences are easily shared (Bauerlein, 2011) and all of this provides for people's craving for intimacy and closeness (Van Manen, 2010).

Facebook is also a method by which 40% of congregations use to communicate with their parishioners and community (Thuma, 2012, March 12).

Not too long ago, the rule for many teens was simply to be home by dark, but societal changes have meant that such face-to-face interaction is no longer the norm, as preference is shifting to social media and thus greatly limiting in-person social interaction with friends (Boyd, 2014). In our current age, social media offers that outlet for teens to socialize and relax (Boyd, 2014) in a way that is not intrusive (Gardner, 2013).

Increased Work Flexibility

There is certainly no doubt that smartphones, laptops, and tablets have all "increased flexibility" as well as "increased accessibility" (Crowe & Middleton, 2012, p. 561). There are several examples in the literature of parents enjoying working from home and having the freedom to be out on a family activity with their kids instead of being hostage to the office as they wait for the all-important phone call or email (Jones, 2010, Sept 20; Lapp, 2014, Jul 14). One mother was sure to express that she uses the technology in moderation and always makes sure her son knows he is priority (Jones, 2010, Sept 20). In this way, mobile technology can liberate a professional from the office.

Brain Benefits From the Use of Modern Technology

Other studies claim that Internet use is a real benefit to the brain because of the increase of communication. One such study found that children who spend an average of

30 minutes a day on the Internet had “higher GPA’s on average and higher standardized test scores and better reading scores” (Kraut et al., 2006, p. 163).

One possible cause for this may be what Thomas (2013) observes as benefits of the Internet in terms of the vast amount of writing that is done because of it. In Thomas’s (2013) book, he claims that every day, in the United States alone “we compose 154 billion emails, 500 million tweets on Twitter, and over 1 million blog posts and 1.3 million blog comments . . . and on Facebook, we write about 16 billion words per day” (pp. 46, 47). According to Thomas, increased communication in our time is broadening our ability to think, reason, and function at a deeper level as well as deepen our closest relationships.

Before the Internet, people rarely composed anything after graduating from high school (Thomas, 2013). In 1860 the average person in America wrote five letters a year—and we compose that now in a single day (Thomas, 2013). Also, all the networking done through the Internet allows thoughts and ideas to grow and develop into superior and better ideas (Thomas, 2013). Basically, Thomas concludes that the Internet provides more open communication today between scholars, leaders, workers, friends, and family. Greater connection and collaboration, provided thus by the Internet, are likely to yield better end results.

Thomas goes on to say that all of this Internet writing improves our memory. Normally an individual can only recall about 20% of what they took in one month ago, but with the information being repeated and reviewed, one can greatly decrease the curve of loss (Thomas, 2013). In the realm of social media, this translates to remembering

people's names, things about them, and other details that can draw us closer and enable us to relate to them in greater and more meaningful ways.

Negative Impact of Mobile Technology on Marriage and Family Relationships

Despite some of the benefits, there are also many areas in which mobile technology can negatively impact our closest relationships. Elmore and Cathy (2010) put it rather bluntly when they talk about how we have created “a world that allows for high speed, constant connection, sedentary lifestyles, pitiful relational skills, and a large dose of narcissism” (p. 15). Through games and social media, an individual can constantly escape their present reality or location. While connecting to these various outlets through one's device, one can be completely oblivious to almost anything happening around them (Elmore & Cathy, 2010). We have been lured by the idea that technology will simplify our lives in every way, but in so many ways they simply make our lives and closest relationships more complicated (Folk, 2014). As we will explore, the solution is not to run and hide, or move to some island, but rather reject the darker sides and prayerfully use technology to better ourselves, our marriages, our families and the Kingdom for God's greater glory (Waliszewski, 2011).

Constant Distraction

According to the research, the core of the problem seems to be the constant bombardment of information. The literature is all saying the same basic thing but in different ways. Some examples are that with mobile technology, we can be much more connected with everyone around us, while being less connected to our most important relationships—our spouses and children (Stanley, 2014). Postman (2005) refers to the

bombardment of information as being on the verge of amusing ourselves to death. Others describe it as a “feast the internet has laid before us; one course after another, each juicier than the last, with hardly a moment to catch our breath between bites” (Carr, 2010, p. 4).

To dissect the idea of constant distraction further, we will look at how full attention is being lost, how multitasking does not work as well as we might think, how family time is often impacted, as well as how social media can also be a big distraction.

Full Attention and the Multitasking Myth

Computers now can fit into our pockets, making these distractions available anywhere, anytime (Carr, 2010). In fact, there is an anxiety that develops when we do not have our smart phone with us, “the classroom, the bathroom, the bedroom, the outdoors – our phone is always in hand as if it were some magic self-defense tool capable of protecting us from all that is evil in the world” (Davenport, 2013, Oct 8). However, having our smartphones constantly opens us up to “a world full of interruptions and intrusions . . . ping-pong toward us” (p. 4). It is this constant bombardment that causes what many describe as a lack of living in the moment and when asked, people said this made their closest relationships more superficial (Risen, 2014). Steiner-Adair and Barker (2014) further confirm this by saying it is this way: “we’ve never had a lifestyle that made screen communications the priority and made it acceptable behavior to ignore others” (p. 23).

One distracted person often distracts another. Often when one person is on their device, the other feels silly sitting there doing nothing, so they pull out their device often resulting in many people sharing the same space, but not present to each other in any way (Gardner, 2013). In so doing, we undermine one of the most validating and affirming

things we can do for another which is listening with understanding, listening with empathy, and reflecting accurately (Balswick & Balswick, 2006). In essence, the family or group of friends is distracted from truly interacting.

How is this impacting society? Interestingly, Chapman and Pellicane (2014) point out that in 2000, before the smartphone existed, the average person's attention span was 12 seconds. By 2014, our attention span had dropped by 40 % or only just over seven seconds (Chapman & Pellicane, 2014). More and more, it seems that only our digital devices can hold our attention. Could it be that "we place too much emphasis on our digital lives and we lose sight of the urgency and beauty of the everyday" (Davenport, 2013, Oct 8, para. 4)?

Hofmann (2014) comes at it from another angle in regards to enjoying an activity with family and friends. He paints the picture of an individual taking, cropping, uploading, sharing, and titling pictures and thus taking a significant amount of time rudely staring at their device when they could be engaged in what is happening with those around them and enjoying it.

Often in our attempt to multitask, we are neither present nor productive (Lapp, 2014, Jul 14). Lapp points out that, while it is true that a digital friendly job allows one to work from anywhere at any time, that also presents the stress of every moment being a choice between the two. Of those that work from home, the biggest complaint is having their attention constantly divided (Lapp, 2014, Jul 14). Lapp says when we multitask, we miss out on the idea of "flow," which is when we get into a zone as if time stands still. Ling (2008) tells us when we multitask, one, if not both of the tasks suffer. That is why when one is on the phone while driving, they can more easily miss their exit, or similarly,

when talking on the phone an individual can walk around a store twenty times (Ling & Campbell, 2011).

Steyer (2012) flatly says that multitasking does not work and says that even hands-free headsets overload the brain with two streams of information at the same time impairing one's function. He tells us that parenting is about "monotasking," being patient, present, and undistracted so that a strong bond can be formed between parent and child. He also emphasizes that parenting cannot be done while keeping one eye on our phones.

Much of the parent-child relationship is centered on listening and validating a child's feelings (Gottman & Declaire, 1997). To listen well means using our eyes to watch for a child's "body language, facial expressions, and gestures" (Gottman & Declaire, 1997, p. 76). Electronic devices rob children of their parent's undivided attention (Chapman & Pellicane, 2014). "Quality time means your child has your undivided attention, and when a television, phone, or video game is present, he doesn't have that" (Chapman & Pellicane, 2014, p. 143). Chapman and Pellicane say too often kids hear "I'm sorry, honey, I can't do that right now." Upon receiving this response day after day one's child can begin to question the parent's love for them (Chapman & Pellicane, 2014, p. 146).

A deficit of undivided attention can also negatively impact marriages. When one's spouse is not offering full attention to that most valued relationship it often feels like a form of betrayal, because it signals that our electronic devices rank above that person (Gottman, 2015).

Theft of Family Time

When it comes to family time, mobile devices can very easily steal the time we have. Psychologists tell us that technology is a common complaint in family counseling and is often voiced as destructive to family relationships (Steiner-Adair & Barker, 2014). One study found that 8-18 year-olds spend an average of 7 hours a day on entertainment media which equates to 49 hours a week (Cloninger & Strembicki, 2013, Sept 12), which is 10 times more than they spend with their parents each week (McCarthy, 2013). The problem with so many of our mobile devices today is that these “electronic based activities . . . individualize leisure time.” Cloninger and Strembicki (2013) point out that all of that screen time means that the device users are not exercising, getting together with friends, or talking with family. All this “individualized leisure time” (Ling, 2008, p. 32) must be pulled from somewhere, and more often than not it is pulled from family meals together, family recreation, and intimate conversations (Katherine, 2013).

While family meals may seem like a small thing, research shows that when a family routinely eats meals together, the children spend more time on their homework, are more likely to read for pleasure, eat more healthfully, and are less likely to engage in future substance abuse, pre-marital sex or have suicidal tendencies (Chapman & Pellicane, 2014). Rachael Briggs claims family meal times are crucial to a child’s language development (Kocic, 2014, para. 5).

Entire dissertations have been dedicated to the benefits of family meals, but unfortunately one-third of parents use their devices continuously throughout the meal (Charles, 2014). What concerns Briggs most are “the kids who have accepted the lack of communication . . . look like they have already given up” (Kocic, 2014, para. 6).

Research shows children resent their parents electronic devices. Jones (2010) refers to a five-year study in which “feelings of jealousy and competition between children and the devices is common” (para. 26). Perhaps that is why children whose parents are the most absorbed in their devices are the most likely to act out in an effort to get their parents’ attention (Neighmond, 2014). Neighmond points out that ignoring one’s children communicates to them that they do not matter and that they are not as interesting as whatever makes their smartphones ping. That is why so many children throw their parent’s phone in the toilet or try to smash it on the floor. One mother admits that her kids hate her Blackberry (Pines, 2010). All of this can have deep emotional consequences for the child (Neighmond, 2014).

Another culprit of traditional family time is the fact that the average full-time worker puts an additional four to ten hours in at home after leaving their job each week (McCarthy, 2013). How can this be accomplished with small children? Often mobile technology is used in the form of a babysitter. However, the sad reality is that these parents are missing out on a fundamental human connection, kisses, and skin-to-skin touch.

Superficiality of Social Media

The old adage used to be, “know thyself.” According to Bauerlein (2011), that expression is being replaced with a new adage, and that is “show thyself” (p. 174). Today, social media allows one to take a photo or video of what they are doing and post it at that same moment. While we can make many social connections through a place like Facebook, the interactions are mainly superficial and impersonal and often lack the emotional investments we might find in a real friendship outside of social life (Hart &

Frejd, 2013). While it can be nice to see aspects of a person's life, it is much different then actually spending time with that person in real, meaningful dialogue. In addition, social science research reminds us that we cannot maintain hundreds of friends but rather that the average individual is only able to maintain intimate relationships with a maximum of twenty-five to thirty people (Balswick & Balswick, 2007). Is it possible one could have thousands of friends on social media but still feel alone and isolated? Could social media provide pseudo intimacy?

Gardner (2013) speaks of a 14-year-old who had a rather alienating experience through Facebook and pulled away from it because she felt it was very unsatisfying and inauthentic. By getting rid of her Facebook account, this girl felt she had weeded out all her fake friend.

Others like the control aspect of social media because in the virtual world they can edit, delete and retouch what they say and how they look (Hart & Frejd, 2013). One might possibly feel safer in a world such as this, but sadly, words and abbreviations do not mean as much on a screen as words spoken in person (Hart & Frejd, 2013). The irony is that one often fears the risk and disappointments of face-to-face interaction, so we turn to the safety of the digital world, and in the process "We have come to expect more from technology and less from each other" (Turkle, 2011, p. xii). This seems to be very much what I have been observing in my church. Many of our young people seem to not have the skills to converse in meaningful ways without technology.

Video calling, such as Skype and Facetime help, but the research points out that this type of conversation is typically reserved for people we already know well and so it

does not help us connect with new acquaintances on a deeper level, thus keeping things at a surface level (Hart & Frejd, 2013).

Some might argue that the success of on-line dating validates that the Internet can foster relationship intimacy. The Association for Psychological Science issued a report saying that, while communication online can foster intimacy, “it can also lead to unrealistic expectations and disappointment when potential partners finally meet in person” (Hart & Frejd, 2013, p. 97). While most dating sites claim they can find the perfect match based on complex algorithms, the reality is that only through spending time with that person in real life, in a variety of situations, can aspects of the person that are vital to marriage emerge authentically (Hart & Frejd, 2013).

Social media like Facebook can also cause a great amount of dissatisfaction and insecurity as one compares oneself with the posts and pictures of other people (Hofmann, 2014). What can be worse, Hofmann (2014) says, than when one girl posts a picture and gets 80 likes and another posts a picture of herself and only gets a few likes. Sadly, too many girls’ self-esteem and self-confidence can be reduced to “likes” (Hofmann, 2014, p. 184). Online pictures and posts within social media cause young girls to treat themselves as objects to be viewed, judged, and valued based on their appearance. Such thinking often leads to low self-esteem and a lack of self-worth and self-respect (Giant, 2013). The self-image of children in their pre-adolescent and earliteen years tends to be very fragile. An ultimate effect of negative experiences with social media can be a host of depression symptoms the worst of which are suicidal thoughts, actions, or plans (Hurley, 2019). Marital partners experience the same; the opinion of the spouse is no longer adequate. I must be “liked” by all my “friends.”

Social media is also unique in that it essentially takes away our ability to be alone (Bauerlein, 2011). Bauerlein cites one common example of a girl who interacts with social media as much as 300 times a day, which mathematically comes out to every 10 minutes. Even if one is not inclined to be a part of some social network like Facebook, the social pressure can be great, according to Folk (2014), to check in and respond to posts from friends, family or loved ones. This can cause a host of problems when one is trying to have a meaningful conversation with their spouse, son, or daughter.

Young people can now communicate via texting and social media, with virtually no parental monitoring. J. Taylor (2013) notes that parents no longer have the same options to monitor the social interaction of their children. Time was when they could at least listen to half the phone conversation and know something of what was going on.

Stanley (2014) further asserts that the constant opportunity to connect with others through technology can also replace one's focus on connecting with God and when this happens, everything can get out of balance. One must remember that "God was the original 'always-on' connection people could have" (p. 173). One must regularly ask if the time spent on social networking is taking time from things that are of greater importance. This is perhaps the greatest issue that is impacting marriages and families across the country. Time that could be spent connecting, sharing, interacting, bonding, is more and more being replaced by the screen.

Negative Changes in the Brain

Another impact of mobile technology borne out by the literature is the negative change in the brain's ability to think, process and respond to information. One study in Britain spoke of the toll that the constant assault of media has on the brain with the never

ending vibrations and alerts, each accompanied by pressure to quickly respond (*“E-mails hurt IQ more than pot”*, ” 2005, April 22). The study found that the IQ drops by 10 points or the equivalent of losing a full night’s sleep! Smoking marijuana only dropped IQ by 4 points in comparison.

Carr (2010) speaks of his own experience and how he used to enjoy long narrative prose, and now his concentration seems to drift after a few pages; he gets fidgety and often starts to look for something else to do. Carr feels this was because of the extensive amount of time spent on-line and that his brain was re-wired to read differently, skimming, hitting links, and googling. Carr explains the internal change to the brain: “The cells of our brains literally develop and grow bigger with use, and atrophy or waste away with disuse, therefore, every action leaves its mark upon the brain” (p. 21). He goes on to say a few pages later that as the experience is repeated, the synaptic links between the neurons grow stronger and more plentiful, thus “cells that fire together wire together” (p. 27).

Similarly, David Levy tells us that life online is giving us “‘popcorn brain,’ – a brain so accustomed to the constant stimulation of electronic multitasking that we’re unfit for life offline, where things pop at a much slower pace” (Cohen, 2011, June 23, para 5). This accounts for short attention spans when conversing with people and an inability to focus on the present. Unfortunately, as Roberts (2014) explains, we can become addicted to the low-level rewards of the buzzing phone and we can become addicted to these jolts, which explains why 58% of people check their phones at least once an hour.

In spite of such information, some might feel that their children must learn to navigate through technology so they will not be left behind. However, Chapman and

Pellicane (2014) cite an experiment by Dr. Gary Small, head of UCLA's memory and aging research center, in which they took a tech savvy individual and one who was not, and asked them to search, skim, and use the Internet while they scanned their brains. What Dr. Small found was that after just five hours, the brain scans looked exactly alike, leading him to believe that a person can learn to be Internet savvy literally overnight. However, someone that is tech savvy cannot learn near as quickly how to be empathetic, be able to concentrate, and read a long passage with comprehension.

It is also worth noting that tech giants seem to understand the potential dangers with technology. Some of the biggest computer brains in business and technology from eBay, Google, Apple, Yahoo, and HP send their kids to schools where technology is totally omitted (Chapman & Pellicane, 2014). Even Bill Gates only allows his daughters to be on the Internet 45 minutes a day (Chapman & Pellicane, 2014).

Nonverbal Communication Sabotaged

Nonverbal communication is such a vital part of how we communicate. Without thinking about it we are sending and receiving cues from one's eyes, face, gestures, voice, tone, and appearance (Verderber, Verderber, & Sellnow, 2010). These interactions can have a profound impact. One study showed that there are direct linkages between parental interacting, such as playing games, spending time together, or talking, and higher achieving children (Pressman, Owens, Evans, & Nemon, 2014).

Yet with the exception of things like Skype and Facetime, mobile technology excuses all the nonverbal cues and allows one to communicate "without the accountability for the impact of our communication, because we can't see the other person's face, note the impact, and adjust our tone" (Steiner-Adair & Barker, 2014, p.

21). The result can be sending a text or email saying things we would never say in person, often resulting in misunderstandings.

Huisman (2014) further points out that eye contact is one of the primary ways in which attachments are made between family members. Unfortunately, the screen is replacing this eye contact because either the parent, the child, or both are looking at a device instead of looking into their child's eyes (Huisman, 2014), which is one of the most powerful ways to communicate love to one's child (Chapman & Pellicane, 2014).

Touch is also a very important part of communicating, especially with our children. Charles (2014) affirms that “when we snuggle, when a parent puts a child to bed—these are important times when parent-child connectedness is important . . . to establish intimacy” (para. 11).

False Intimacy

We have been created for intimate relationship, to see another clearly, with as little distortion as possible, and to share thoughts, feelings, and the heart (Hart & Frejd, 2013). These “real-life encounters are worth the effort and will bring glory to God and help your relationships thrive and flourish” (p. 108).

Apple is now advertising with their Apple Watch that they are “seeking an intimate symbiosis and deeply personal partnership between humans and machines” (Isaacson, 2014, p. 48). Pop culture spins this idea a little further with a recent Academy Awards nomination for Best Picture of a movie called “Her” in which a man falls in love with his smartphone operating system (Risen, 2014). Even the movie “Her” shows the spuriousness of such “technological” intimacy and the craving we have for the true human intimacy.

The reality is that just about every potentially intimate moment between persons can be interrupted today with the alert of smartphones. In fact, true intimacy can be interrupted by just the tentativeness and suspense that at any moment we might be interrupted, thus the human tendency is to hold back and not truly get into a deep part of oneself for the fear that they will be put on hold (Katherine, 2013). Katherine believes this constant halt or stop in flow can be a real intimacy killer. To accomplish greater levels of connectedness, one may have to initiate putting the distracting devices away for a time (Katherine, 2013). Boundaries may have to be set, and in setting that boundary we are creating a cleaner space for our own life, and telling the other person as well as oneself that “I matter” (Katherine, 2013, p. 217).

Dangerous Health Risks

The literature also reveals dangers to the physical, social, and mental health of individuals and the severe impact on family relationship of those who take the Internet and mobile technologies to extremes.

Internet Addiction

Currently, there are programs in Northern California where people are paying \$570 to attend an adult summer camp aimed at helping people overcome their addiction with the screen (Roberts, 2014). Kimberly Young is a psychologist at the Center for Internet Addiction and describes dozens of teenagers she has met who have tried to quit Facebook, but cannot seem to do it (Boyd, 2014). One young man would get on Facebook in the evening and stay up until 2:00 am (Boyd, 2014). Another teen Melanie says she would get on Myspace and before she knew it five hours would be gone (Boyd, 2014). Lilly says, “Yeah, you get sucked in” (Boyd, 2014, p. 80). For so many children,

the default activity is the Internet and that thought is that free time equals screen time (Chapman & Pellicane, 2014).

There is some indication in the literature that use of smartphone technology is feeding a dopamine need and that brain chemistry is very much involved in the habitual use of one's technology. David Greenfield is a technology addiction therapist who says that 65% of the population abuse technology, but as much as 10% of people are clinically addicted to it (Chapman & Pellicane, 2014). The addiction can take hold because the Internet can flood our brain's pleasure center. The neurotransmitter dopamine is directly responsible for behavior that can be repetitive in frequency and increased quantity because of the pleasure it gives. Just like any drug with repetitive hits, through things like email bearing good news, or a funny photo, such hits cause a squirt of dopamine to be released, that results in a craving that must be fulfilled and met, and further result in everything else as being lame or boring (Chapman & Pellicane, 2014). When the use of mobile technology becomes addictive, the user can experience withdrawal akin to that of some drug usage which can be accompanied by emotional outbursts.

There are other negative impacts also. According to the "Mayo Clinic, too much screen time has been linked to: obesity, irregular sleep, behavioral problems, impaired academic performance, violence, and less time for active and creative play" (Chapman & Pellicane, 2014, p. 182). While some feel it is only a problem with young people, Hart and Frejd (2013) point to a Barna Report that reveals that "parents are now spending just as much time in the digital world as their children" which on average is about 8 hours a day (p. 18).

Pornography

Pornography certainly is a huge problem. Research tells us that: 12% of websites are pornographic, one in three pornographic viewers are women, 70 % of men 18-24 visit porn sites monthly, the average age a child sees porn online is 11, not to mention the 34% of Internet users who have experienced unwanted exposure to porn through pop-up ads, emails, and misdirected links (Chapman & Pellicane, 2014). *The Washington Post* reported that more than 11 million of our teenagers now view Internet porn on a regular basis (Hart & Frejd, 2013). Then there are situations of a 14-year-old boy sexting nude pictures of his girlfriend and within a few seconds becoming a distributor of pornography (Edgington, 2011). These practices just further breakdown true intimacy and promote the idea of people as objects as spoken of earlier in this paper.

Isolation

Mobile technology has also been shown to isolate an individual. In fact, there is a direct correlation between the amount of time spent in a virtual world and feelings of being lonely and isolated (Chapman & Pellicane, 2014). As a result, our young people are not learning virtues from those around them, nor are they learning how to interact face-to-face (Chapman & Pellicane, 2014). Another interesting outcome is that over half of the American children describe themselves as shy when in reality only 12% met the criteria for social phobia and the remainder have not learned how to interact with others (Chapman & Pellicane, 2014).

False Realities

The Internet also provides opportunities for “all of us to play with masks” and create a persona one would not want one’s parents or boss to know about (Bauerlein, 2011, pp. 101). One can masterfully portray a life on Facebook that is far from reality (Hofmann, 2014). Many use media as a form of escape (Kirsh, 2010).

One such virtual world called Second Life is a place one can go and build an avatar to look, live, work, and do the things we want (Turkle, 2011). He goes on to say, “Now you have the potential, as Second Life puts it, to live a life that will enable you to love your life” (p. 158). Turkle further describes how one can get an education, launch a business, buy land, build and furnish a home, but can also have a social life that may include love, sex, and marriage. Sadly, one individual said, “Second Life gives me a better relationship than I have in real life, . . . where I feel most myself, . . . [and] my relationship with Jade [his virtual wife] makes it possible for me to stay in my marriage, with my family” (Turkle, 2011, p. 159). In South Korea, someone got so involved in a similar false reality that they starved their real child while raising a virtual one in an Internet café across the street (Breitenstein, 2010, March 5). This is tragic, and stands to show how serious false realities can be.

Infidelity

Gallo (2011) points out that infidelity is on the rise as every day there is greater access and social ambiguity online that increases the opportunity for cheating (p. 13). The research indicates that the Internet is more damaging than helpful to marriages because it distracts couples from spending time together (Hart & Frejd, 2013). Add to that the emotional affairs that people are having through Facebook as they connect with old

boyfriends or girlfriends – people they would have never had access to before (Hart & Frejd, 2013). There is a deeper leveling of connecting that many crave in their relationships, but often one will confuse digital intimacy for true intimacy (Hart & Frejd, 2013).

Of those couples in which one was found cheating online, only 15% said they could fully restore their trust in their partner, and over half feel their partner has not told them the whole truth (Schneider, Weiss, & Samenow, 2012). A big reason for this is that the Internet can now be accessed in so many ways that can easily go undetected.

Managing Technology

As one can imagine, there is much advice on how to manage mobile technology. However, none of this advice recommends we throw it out, but endeavors to provide guidance in how to put it in its proper place. There is plenty of overlap, but what follows are some of the many suggestions found in the literature to help us live in better balance with mobile technology.

Some suggest avoiding technology that replaces face-to-face conversation and community building, welcoming media fasts, and setting limits (Breitenstein, 2010, March 5). There are other suggestions of when to leave our phones behind. Preserve car rides for conversations, make the bedroom a digital free zone, leave our devices at home when going to enjoy the outdoors, say goodbye to the electronic babysitter, do not allow phones or screens during mealtimes, remember who is the parent (Chapman & Pellicane, 2014), and set uninterrupted time for our kids (Powell, Griffin, & Crawford, 2011).

As far as mobile phone use, there are other ways to set limits and boundaries. Some suggest turning off all notifications allowing the user the freedom to check certain

apps when they want to (Pines, 2010). This also helps keep the user from getting distracted as they go to check the weather and then get sucked into Facebook, email, Instagram, Twitter, and the like. While this suggestion seems simple, it can be a real game changer for some.

When it comes to one's children, parents need to realize that children expect parents to step in and set media and technology limits (Hoover, Clark, & Alters, 2012). Some have argued that the church needs to step in more and encourage these limits within their children. However, Garland (2012) makes plain that in any given year, parents have 3,000 hours of contact with their children, and the church only has 40. To disciple one's children rests squarely in the hands of the parents. Create charts for children and their technology use and how it is being used, such as education, socialization, enrichment, entertainment, and set maximum time limits (Schwarz, 2009). It is also recommended to have conversations about protecting family privacy and what is ok and not ok to share with those outside the family (Garland, 2012).

Illustrated Positive Change

Recently *Dateline* (2013a) aired a story of four 20-somethings that lived together and were constantly on their smartphones. Each accepted a challenge to go on a digital detox for two weeks—no Facebook, no Twitter, no GPS, no Internet (*Dateline*, 2013a). Before the detox, they all went out to eat, but virtually the entire time they were staring at their devices and only occasionally making comments about what they saw on-line (*Dateline*, 2013a).

Then as the detox began, *Dateline* (2013b) showed them going through major withdrawals. Fidgeting, not knowing what to do with their hands, getting lost on a trip to

the beach without their GPS, and feeling completely cut off from the outside world (*Dateline*, 2013b). But by the end of the time, the four girls acknowledged that their minds were clearer, that they grew closer as roommates, and in general were less distracted (*Dateline*, 2013b). In a broad sense, these roommates were family and as a result of putting the technology down, their family grew closer in marked ways.

In Hofmann's book, there is another such example where she relates a personal story. Her family decided to leave all their devices at home and went to the beach for the day and spent their time playing in the waves, building sand castles, and being fully engaged. On the way home her kids commented that that was the most fun they had ever had at the beach and they all attributed it to being fully present in the moment (Hofmann, 2014).

Summary and Implication of Literary Findings

The bulk of literature strongly suggests that mobile technology must have limits in our lives. Mobile technology can and does bring families closer together, but it also has significant potential to further isolate us from one another and meaningful face-to-face interactions and for many, this can be observed in their own homes. Mobile technology is not inherently evil, but one must guard against the endless supply of information, chances to engage with work, be entertained, or even connect with friends, because often this can be done at the wrong time and at the expense of our spouse and children. Awareness of the issues, having frequent and honest conversations with those closest to us, and setting limits all seem to be keys to success. Like so many things in life, it is how we manage mobile technology that will determine the outcomes. Temperance

allows us to reject the darker sides of technology and prayerfully use technology to better ourselves, our marriages, and our families for God's glory.

CHAPTER 4

DESCRIPTION OF THE INTERVENTION

Families in the Hendersonville Seventh-day Church have benefited from recent developments in mobile communication technology, such as iPhones, iPads, and portable computers. They also give evidence of experiencing the downsides of such technological devices—constant distraction, inordinate consumption of time, and the robbery of family interaction. The intervention described in this chapter illustrates an educational seminar designed to inform families within the Hendersonville Seventh-day Adventist Church of the advantages as well as the dangers of mobile technology and empower them to make choices that enhance their marriages and parent-child relationships in our ever-changing technological world.

This chapter is divided into four sections. The first section gives a concise profile of the ministry context as it relates to my project. The second section describes the development of the intervention detailing the methodology that was used in the intervention, an education seminar, and how the intervention effectiveness was evaluated. It also demonstrates how the development of the seminar grew out of, and was influenced by the theological reflection and the literature review. The third section gives greater details to the description of the intervention and gives more detail about the recruitment, seminar, logistics, and each of the sessions. The bulk of the chapter is spent in the fourth section, which looks more closely at a night by night seminar development and andragogy.

Profile of the Ministry Context

In the Hendersonville Seventh-day Adventist Church, there is a growing challenge facing young families that has been observed over the last six years that I have been part of that congregation. Life has always been busy for families with various work, school, and church responsibilities, however, with the introduction to the smartphone and mobile technology, one is essentially available to communicate, work, and be entertained any part of any day.

When I first came to this congregation as an associate pastor working primarily with youth and young families, I observed how the attention of a parent was often divided rather than being focused on their child. Couples were replacing eye contact and conversation with a position where the head is down and the thumbs are moving across a screen and selecting options. In church and worship services, sitting on daddy's lap and listening is being replaced with being on daddy's iPhone and checking out. I regularly observe the struggle between parents and their children regarding mobile technology and how it often causes greater stress in the relationship.

The Hendersonville Seventh-day Adventist Church was a church plant of the Fletcher Seventh-day Adventist Church in the 1920s. Since that time, the Hendersonville Church has grown to almost the same size as the Fletcher church. They have about 875 members, and our present membership of just over 700 with about 315 in average attendance. The church membership is predominantly Caucasian which reflects the greater community where 93% of the population is Caucasian. Our educational status is also on par with the county, as well as our median household income.

We are one of six Adventist churches within a 15-mile radius. We are known within the Adventist community as being one of the more conservative congregations with every age group represented from the cradle to the grave including a sizable number of collegiates. However, we have a rather large senior age base because of Fletcher Park, an Adventist senior living community within our area. Also, nearby is one of our Adventist Hospitals, Park Ridge Health. We have an elementary school, local Adventist Academy, and hospital all within a seven-minute drive of our church. Hendersonville and the neighboring Asheville cities have plenty to offer year around as well. All of this is to say that there are plenty of social opportunities to interact with people face-to-face. Yet often I see that interaction being traded for on-line interaction. For the sake of my project, we will be looking primarily at how this same phenomenon is taking place within the family unit.

Youth, from kindergarten- through collegiate-age, make up 25% of our local congregation, all of whom interact with technology on a daily basis. Of the remaining 75%, about half own a smartphone. With the rise of mobile technology and what it can do, there have been many noticeable trends that can be seen both in and outside our church with virtually no observable difference. It is not uncommon to see my members in the community, at the store, or in a restaurant, and they are not talking or interacting the way they used to even just 10 years ago, but are staring at their devices. In talking with other couples, they confirm the growing challenge while at home or at the park, to give their children their full attention instead of being on their phone, or checking social media. Many of them recognize it as a problem, but say they have a hard time breaking it. In my Youth Sabbath School class, teens are texting, sending pictures, tagging their

friends, and “liking” posts of others. Phones ring often during the worship service. Within the worship service, people’s attention is often divided.

There are a variety of concepts out there as seen in the literature review, but it really boils down to two schools of thought: One school says that says that mobile technology is helping us be more connected in our closest relationships, while the other opinion says technology is stealing important moments of conversation and intimacy between spouses and between parents and their children.

In my church as well as in my own home, I am able to observe the benefits and challenges of mobile technology and feel that both schools of thought have valid points. For most people in this day and age, throwing away mobile technology means the inability to do their job and communicate on many levels. On the other extreme, mobile technology can dominate every aspect of life and can be addictive and abused.

At present, a void exists in our ministry to families and in our provision of resources to help them clarify their values about the investment of time and money on mobile technology, as well as discernment of the impact of technology on crucial aspects of personal spiritual development and relational intimacy. How, when, and to what extent do we use the technology that is in our hands? To answer some of these questions, I started to ponder a seminar that would address the subject in my local church.

Development of the Intervention

A Mobile Technology Seminar for Married Couples and Parents

To address some of the challenges of mobile technology in our congregation and to answer some of the questions that this technology raises, this project will utilize an education seminar for married couples and parents. In the Hendersonville Seventh-day

Adventist Church, we have had very good success with seminars extending over many weeks. We have had many people attend our cooking schools, money management seminars, or evangelistic campaigns. Our fellowship hall has been used for many of these seminars for a variety of reasons. First, it seems to be a perfect size for the number of people who usually show up and is very flexible with regard to the types of programs for which it can be used. The room is often set up with 10 to 12 round tables, a podium at the front of the room, a screen for Keynote or video, and is also outfitted with a nice public address system. With the described setting we can serve a meal, have a lecture, as well as turn it over to the individual tables for small group discussion. The PA system allows for us to easily be heard in the presentation and a roaming mic allows us to get feedback from the various tables.

With the success that we have had in the past, I felt that a technology seminar would be a good way to educate our people on this topic. It would give me the flexibility to mix presentation with video, group discussion, case studies, and individual worksheets or fill in the blanks. I feel very comfortable in such a presentation environment, and the attendees do, too. The ability for interaction with one another and with the presenter helps keep people's attention and gives them an opportunity to contribute to the discussion. I see many advantages with being able to present in this type of environment that is conducive both to presentation and group discussion. One advantage is that, as the teacher, I can go from group to group to get an idea of how the people are connecting and relating with the information. I can monitor whether the question or assignment is clear or needs clarification. Do they need more time for discussion or are they ready to move on?

Research Methodology

As an important part of this ministry project, in addition to conducting the seminar itself, I wanted to know what impact the five-week course would have on spouses and families and their interaction and connection with each other. To accomplish this, I conducted pre- and post-interviews with a group of hand-selected couples and families. The make-up of the group is discussed later in this chapter.

The questions for the pre-interview were open-ended in nature. The first question was (a) “What uses do your family members make of mobile technology (laptop, tablet, smartphone)?” Then the questioning moved into specific areas to be evaluated such as, (b) “How much time, would you estimate, does each member of your family spend on mobile technology on an average day? (c) How would you describe a perfect, or ‘best possible,’ balance between mobile technology and family connection in your home? (d) Do you have any guidelines as a family in regards to social media? (e) What measures have you taken to try to achieve balance and safety for your family in regards to mobile technology and how are those measures working out for your family?”

In the post-interview, the same six questions were asked with the sole purpose of seeing if the seminar was able to move the needle, even slightly, in a positive direction. Did the time spent on their mobile devices change? Did their level of communication satisfaction change? If feelings of jealousy existed, did that change?

In comparing the pre-interviews with the post-interviews, the hope was to see a positive change in the attitudes and behaviors of those in my church, resulting in greater connection and communication between spouses and between parents and their children.

Description of the Intervention

Objectives of the Seminar

My objectives in this seminar were six-fold. My first objective was to help parents more clearly see that challenges that mobile technology poses on the family and how it has reshaped how we interact with one another. My second objective was to help them see that while social media has its place, it creates a false sense of intimacy that can have negative consequences for the individual and the family unit. My third objective was to help them see how much time was being consumed through the use of mobile technology and help them see the need of setting limits. Fourthly, I wanted to get practical about how one could best manage mobile technology and what were some of the best practices they could apply to their situations. The fifth objective was to help them more fully realize the health risks that exist with mobile technology and how one can protect themselves and their children from the real dangers that mobile technology poses. Lastly, I wanted those in the seminar to feel a sense of comradery and accountability with one another and encourage an ongoing conversation on this topic.

Participants

This seminar was promoted in the church, and anyone from our church or in the community was welcome to come. For the purpose of research on the effectiveness of the seminar, the focus was on a selected group of eleven families with the greatest amount of mobile technology in the home, including laptops, tablets, and smartphones. The parents, or heads of these families, were asked to participate in pre- and post- interviews based on the questions presented in the previous section. The bulk of the group included families with preschoolers and elementary age, as well as families with teenagers. Entire families

were welcome to attend the seminar, but the parents were the primary target group of this intervention. To round out the study, I included a newly married couple who had no children as well as a few tech-savvy grandparents.

I began informing our members about the event that would run from October 23, 2017 through December 5, 2017 at our first of the year church business meeting. Starting in August, I contacted five or more families about participating in the research group either in person or by phone. Saying “yes” to the research group meant committing to attending all five sessions. The process during this time period included, doing the homework, participating in a pre-interview and post-interview, and generally engaging in the process. The pre-interviews started in the middle of September and ran through the middle of October. I began the post-interviews after the holidays at the start of 2018.

General advertising for everyone in our church began four weeks before the event and increased in intensity up to the opening night of the seminar. Area churches were also notified and asked to carry announcements in their bulletins for those that would like to attend. Local radio was utilized and we handed out flyers at our community service center and at other outreach events happening in the fall. Right before we had this seminar, we had an evangelistic series at our church. At the conclusion of those meetings, we invited participants to join us for this event as well.

Seminar Logistics

The seminar took place in our newly-remodeled fellowship hall in the lower level of our church. While we were open for the community to join us, this was very much for our church members, so renting a separate hall did not seem necessary.

Our fellowship hall easily holds about 10 round tables with room at the front for the

presentation. This allowed us to have anywhere between 60-100 people, however, even with a smaller group of 40 it feels like a good group.

Round Tables for Small Groups

Round tables are a crucial aspect of this process. They are helpful for homework, group activities, and table discussions. With the small group component at the tables, everyone had the opportunity to talk and be part of the discussion.

Refreshments

Our church provided a light supper each of the nights. They made something simple and left a basket at the end of the table for donations to help cover the cost. That worked very well. It enabled people to come straight from work and not have to worry about supper for the evening.

Audio-Visual Equipment

Another logistic consideration that was very necessary for this to go well was to have a projector and screen for the Keynote presentations, video clips, and group questions. Having visual aids really added interest to the presentation and held people's attention. It also helped keep the presenter on track. At times, I would ask for feedback from the various table discussions and for that, a wireless microphone was very helpful. With the presenter wearing a lapel and with a roaming microphone, the discussion could flow quite well.

Schedule

The seminar was held for five weeks on Tuesday evenings from 6:30 p.m. – 8:00 p.m., though supper was offered at 6:00 p.m. While it could have been presented twice a week for three weeks, I think once a week was better because it gave people time to process the information as well as do various homework assignments, speak with accountability partners, and put new practices in place. Each week there was time to share things they were learning, what was going well, and what they wished was going better.

The rationale for having all of these pieces in place was to create an atmosphere that was non-threatening and flexible. We were able to have food, discussion, presentation, and case studies very easily with the setting described. Further, the location in the past has worked well for our members, we have had great success with guests coming to many functions such as this in the past, and it does not cost us anything to use the space.

Seminar Sessions

In this section of the chapter, we will look at the five sessions in greater detail. For each session, there is a stated objective. Then I further describe the session, an approximation of how the time was spent, as well as the things that were incorporated from the biblical study and literature review and why.

Week 1: Mobile Technology and the Family

Objective

The objective of the first night was to help them see the need and relevance of the topic and its impact on the relationships within the family. However, the key was to strike a balance between showing the need and also giving them hope. If they followed the process that was outlined, they would acquire tools and means that would draw them closer to God and to one another.

Program

6:00 – 6:30 p.m. Welcome, prayer and supper

6:30 – 6:45 p.m. Introduction to session topic

Familiar photos of people using smartphones at the park, in restaurants, at the breakfast table, and before going to bed were shown. Statistics gleaned from the review of literature in Chapter 3 were shared, such as how people now spend more of their time on the Internet on their smartphones than on their computers and the average number of hours that adults, teens, and even toddlers spend looking at some form of mobile technology each day.

6:45 – 7:05 p.m. Group discussions and responses

Mobile technology and marriage. I then asked them how this change in technology over the past 10 years had impacted their *marriages* (or marriages they know, if they were single) and give the time over to the individual roundtable groups for seven

minutes to talk about it. Then I gave an opportunity for a few to share with the larger group some of the pros and cons they had experienced as a couple.

Mobile technology and parenting. The next question for discussion was: How has mobile technology impacted your relationships with your *children*? I again allowed a few to share with the entire class some of the pros and cons they had experienced.

7:05 – 7:35 p.m. Presentation

Positives related to mobile technology. Using Keynote and the best arguments from my literature review, I shared what people were saying about how mobile technology *benefits* family and relationships: such as, increased communication and emotional connection, increased work flexibility, as well as improved brain function.

Negatives related to mobile technology. Then I shared what has been considered the *negatives* related to mobile technology. For this section, I pulled largely from the part of the literature review heading entitled “Constant Distraction.” We looked at the impact of the constant bombardment of “pings” and notifications. I also shared some of the information from the “Negative Changes in the Brain,” such as falling IQ scores and how it can be more difficult to stay focused on a given task.

7:35 – 7:40 p.m. Devotional thought

During the first class, I did not share very much from the biblical concepts, because this was more of an introduction to the problem. As we moved more into solutions, the biblical principles were worked in. However, I put on the screen 1 Thessalonians 5:21 that reminds us to “Test all things, hold fast what is good.” This was a theme verse throughout the seminar and put them at ease that I was not asking them to get rid of their mobile technology altogether.

7:40 – 7:50 p.m. Group discussion and response

After the Keynote presentation, I gave the groups seven minutes to discuss what they just heard, and to respond. Then we came back together as a class and shared a few highlights from two or three of the groups.

7:50 – 8:00 p.m. Concluding remarks

Before I concluded, I gave them an overview of what we were going to cover in the next four Tuesdays. The overview included the following subjects: social media and the sense of false intimacy it can create, the need to take breaks from technology and rest, some of the dangerous health risks, an overview of best practices, how to best manage our mobile technology, as well as some testimonies from those in the class. I also prepared them for a weekly homework challenge. This helped them take the information and apply it to their daily lives.

As part of my closing remarks, I assured them that this issue is like so many others. Technology is not evil, nor are smartphones, but the way we use them is important. Anything in excess can be bad. The key to this seminar was to help them see more clearly how technology was impacting the relationships closest to them and how they could take active steps to glorify God, even in how they use technology.

Homework challenge

The challenge was that whenever they were eating a meal with another person, they had to put their phone down and not pick it up again until everyone at the table was finished eating. To help them with this, I told them about a simple app they could download called “DinnerMode.” I briefly explained how to use it and sent them on their way.

Week 2: Social Media and False Intimacy

Objective

The objective of the second night was to present the difference between social media and virtual interactions versus connecting with real, live people. The first tends to be shallower, while the latter incorporates the non-verbal aspects of communication that are so critical. Through this process, I hoped to help them understand why so many today have thousands of “friends” on social media but feel lonely and depressed. The purpose of the second night was not to convince them to throw out social media but to realize that it cannot fulfill the deep heart yearning for closeness and connection with others.

Program

6:00 – 6:30 p.m. Welcome, prayer, and supper

6:30 – 6:45 p.m. Introduction to session topic

I introduced this session with some facts about social media, how big it is, and how much time is spent “connecting” in this way. People may have literally thousands of “friends” but in this session we explored whether or not social media, as Hart and Frejd (2013) point out, can provide the lasting connects they need to be fulfilled. To further flesh out this section I used much of the material found in the literature review under the subsection entitled “Superficiality of Social Media.”

6:45 – 7:05 p.m. Group discussion and responses

For the group discussion, the class was given a case study in handout form. They were asked to read it through and respond to the questions included. This case study gave them the opportunity to evaluate three different situations in regard to social media and

the impact it can have on relationships closest to them. Each small group was given fifteen minutes to discuss these cases. At the conclusion of that time, we came together again as a class and I let a few groups share their thoughts.

7:05 – 7:35 p.m. Lecture

False intimacy. At this point, I continued with my lecture and enumerated the main points from the literature review entitled, “Nonverbal Communication Sabotaged” and “False Intimacy.” I spoke to the important elements of nonverbal cues, how social media can be a mask – only portraying things we want others to see, and how this is counter to genuine intimacy where people accept the whole of who a person is.

Biblical intimacy. From there I transitioned into the biblical explanation of how we were made for communication, for connection, and for intimacy. I spoke of God’s original design in Genesis, how sin broke that connection, but how God through Scripture has been attempting to restore that connection through the sanctuary, through Jesus coming, and his promise to come again to take us home. Then I contrasted genuine intimacy, as seen in Scripture, with the snapshot one gets into others’ lives through social media.

Positive aspects of social media. I spoke of how social media has a place and shared some examples such as people with major health challenges able to post updates, share pictures with relatives, and create family groups to stay in better touch with one another on their own time.

7:35 – 7:45 p.m. Group discussion and responses

I then gave the table groups five minutes to come up with some positive ways that social media can enrich family life and glorify God. At the end of that time, I allow an opportunity for various groups to share.

7:45 – 8:00 p.m. Concluding remarks

Here I further emphasized that social media is not the highest, most intimate form of communication. In the theological review of chapter 2, I shared things from a section entitled, “Self-control & Temperance.” In my conclusion I challenged them to think about temperance (1 Cor 9:25) and self-control (Gal 5:22-23). I also closed with an illustration in which a family, obsessed with social media, decided to go to the beach and leave their devices at home for a change. On the way home, they all said it was the best day at the beach they had had in years.

Homework challenge

For the homework challenge, the class was asked to keep track of their time on devices. One way they could do that was by going in the phone settings under battery. There is an option there that shows how much time is being spent on various apps and that could be used to evaluate time spent in various categories, such as social media. Adding up this information from all their devices would give their total time spent. The following week they were asked to report what they found to their table. For those that like apps, I told them about an app called “Moment” that keeps track of one’s usage and also create reminders of when not to be on their devices.

Week 3: Technology and Time

Objective

The objective for the third Tuesday was to help them understand the inordinate amount of time one can spend using mobile technology. In this class, I wanted them to think about their media consumption and ask themselves if they were satisfied with the time spent. Does it seem balanced or do they ever feel like a slave to their device? I also wanted to challenge the notion of multitasking.

Program

6:00 – 6:30 p.m. Welcome, prayer, and supper

6:30 – 7:10 p.m. Presentation

Time stats. This session began by sharing statistics like that of the Kaiser Family Foundation in which they found that 8-18-year-olds on average spend seven hours a day on entertainment media which equates to 49 hours a week (Cloninger & Strembicki, 2013, Sept 12). I spoke of how mobile technology is invading family outings, meals, and evenings that could be spent interacting with one another in activities and conversation. I gave stats and examples of couples who look at their phone first thing when they wake up and the last thing when they go to bed.

Multitasking myth. I looked at the argument that many use regarding multitasking and sought to debunk that idea. To do that, I shared stats about how technology has shortened our attention span, how multitasking prevents us from being fully present and fully productive. I shared with them how in reality, an individual gets far less done while “multitasking” because it breaks “the flow” of being fully immersed

in something and instead gives them “popcorn” brain—something introduced in chapter 3. I shared the common example of being on the phone while grocery shopping and walking around the store half-a-dozen times.

Vision casting. In contrast to some of these poor practices, I spoke of the proven benefits of families eating one meal a day together. I talked about vitalized couples who communicate well and what that looks like. I gave examples of families on mission trips where phones were not an option and the benefits that are enjoyed because of that simple difference.

“Coming apart” in Scripture. I then got into the principle of “coming apart” and rest that Jesus practiced. I sought to show the basic, but necessary components of how Jesus came apart to be with His Father and how His full attention was devoted to that activity. I spoke of how Jesus came apart with his disciples and why it was important. I brought in the Sabbath and the principles we find there.

7:10 – 7:30 p.m. Group discussion and response

I then turned the time over for some table discussion. The activity I posed to the tables was simply, “What practical ways can you as a couple or family come apart and rest from the constant pull of mobile technology? Share with the group some practical things that you and your family are already doing to give you success in this area.” After ten minutes of discussion, I then asked the groups to share some of their insights with the entire class.

Following their sharing, I gave some ideas from the literature, such as places in the house that are “tech-free zones,” or times—like the bedroom or the dinner table. Families could incorporate a technology cut-off time each evening. While I mentioned it

before, again I took them through the “Moment” app, which allows an individual to set times of the day when their phone is not allowed to be used, and explain to them how that works. I also reminded them of the “DinnerMode” app that they can use to protect meal or family times.

Homework challenge

7:30 – 7:45 p.m. Homework review

Before closing, I asked them to pull out their homework from last time. For the next 12 minutes, I wanted every person at the table to share their report of how much time they spent on social media as well as the total time spent on mobile technology.

7:45 – 7:55 p.m. Homework challenge

Following that discussion, I challenged anyone who spends more than three hours a week on social media to take a 21-day social media fast and explained what that might look like. For those that did not have that issue, I challenged them to take fasts from media in other ways such as no tech at the table, or no tech two hours before bedtime and the first hour one is awake. To accomplish some of these things, I gave them some practical suggestions.

Week 4: Dangerous Health Risks and Prevention

Objective

For this fourth week, the objective was to help make parents aware of the many dangers and pitfalls that exist in the mobile technology world and provide them with some practical safety measures they can implement.

Program

For this session, I started my Keynote presentation by going deeper into the what Paul means in 1 Thessalonians 5:21 when he implores us to “Test all things and keep what is good.” As Christians, we are to test everything! When testing things, Philippians 4:8 has always been a gold standard: “Whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things.” In essence, one must ask: “Is this activity worthy of one’s respect? Is it above any form of reproach? Is it commendable and of moral excellence?” In short, Philippians 4:8 is a call to focus one’s thoughts and attention on Christ and things compatible with His character.

Then, in brief, I listed many examples of how mobile technology can be dangerous—pornography is a huge one, along with “sexting,” all range of games, isolation, violent material, false realities, infidelity, Internet addiction, and bad music—just to name a few. To help them understand the seriousness of the issue I told the story of an 18-year-old male texting his 17-year-old girlfriend one night and asking her to text him a topless picture of her. She responded to his poor choice by making her own poor choice and consented to his request. Then for bragging rights, this young man chose to share that picture with a few of his close friends. In a matter of five minutes, this young man had committed a prosecutable crime of distribution of child pornography.

I also share with them that apps exist that look like a calculator but are actually made for storing inappropriate pictures that can only be accessed by entering a passcode into the calculator. In one school in Colorado, an investigation discovered that the

majority of the students had these types of apps on their phones with inappropriate pictures of their classmates.

I could go on and on about the negatives of social media and handheld devices, but I simply wanted to draw their attention to the fact that handing their teen an unlocked smartphone was not a good idea. Then I asked a local principal of our academy, who is very tech savvy, to share with the group practical ways for protecting their children. Certainly, there is no foolproof way to do this, but we must do our due diligence and limit the access to this negative content as much as possible. I gave this principal about 35 minutes to talk about setting up one's home Wi-Fi network to filter out negative content as well using parental controls for those who have iPhones. Following his presentation, he took about five minutes for question and answer time.

I then came along behind our guest presenter and talked about some various Internet accountability apps for internet browsing such as X3Watch, as well as texting and driving apps like "Focus." These apps do not limit what an individual can do, but do send an email report to accountability partners.

Homework challenge

The challenge for this session was to think about areas and ways they could bring in greater levels of accountability to protect themselves and their children from the harmful dangers of the internet. This challenge included looking at hardware and software, but beyond that, it challenged parents to have open and honest conversations often with their kids about the dangers of the internet.

Week 5: Best Practices

Objective

The objective of this final class was three-fold: First, to summarize what had been stated and learned; second, to give an opportunity for people to share their 21-day social media fast experience; and lastly, to discover what impact this seminar had on them, their spouse, and their children.

Program

For this presentation, I referred to a number of the Keynote slides from the former presentations. The participants were reminded of the social media pitfalls and false intimacy. They were reminded of the time that can be wasted staring at our phones and the high costs of constant distraction. They were reminded of many of the best practices when using mobile technology. They were reminded of the risks and how to combat them. They were reminded of all the good the technology has to offer.

We also spend some time looking at Triston Harrison's suggestions for smart phone usage that allows the user to be in control and feel good about their usage. I shared a few short videos about how Mr. Harrison envisions a future where the user is priority rather than time spent on the app and profits margins.

Following that, we spend some time on case studies of common examples of technology abuse that can take place in the home. One focused on younger children, one with teens, and one between husband and wife. Using the tools that they had learned, I asked each table how they would deal with the specific problem presented in the case

study. After some time, I asked them to report their suggestions to the larger class for learning and discussion.

In an attempt to keep things balanced, I then wanted to review some of the benefits of mobile technology and how technology has improved our lives in many ways. I spoke about wonderful Bible Software apps, Bible memorization apps, great sermon apps such as Audioverse, and Bible study resources such as Amazing Facts and others. One can also listen to marriage enrichment and parenting books through Audible or check out audio books for free from their local library through an app called “Hoopla.” I reviewed how mobile devices can live stream church services when we cannot be present due to illness or travel. I described all this to make the point again that mobile technology is not inherently evil, but depends fully and completely on how we use it.

In the final few minutes of the seminar, I pressed upon them that from this day forward the decision was theirs. From here forward they would have to choose how, when, where, and how often they would engage with mobile technology. They would have to choose what apps to have on their phones. They would have to choose what conversations must be had with their children.

Our seconds make up our minutes. Our minutes make up our hours. Our hours make up our days. And our days make up our lives. How would they choose to live their lives and how would they glorify God by their technology choices?

Testimonies and graduation

Then I had a testimony time. During this time, many shared about their experience regarding the social media fast or other aspects of the class that had made an

impact on their family. Following the testimony time, we had a graduation from the class, complete with a diploma.

Following the final night, I began conducting the post-interviews with the eight families that attended all five sessions and did the pre-interview. I asked the same set of open-ended questions and compared their answers with what they said a few months ago. I looked for areas that changed as well as areas that stayed the same. I also evaluated the seminar approach to try to decipher what worked well and what I would do differently next time.

Conclusion

In this tidal wave of mobile technology, the way we communicate has changed dramatically in the last ten years. At the time of this project, three-fourths of the Hendersonville Seventh-day Adventist Church members had smartphones and/or tablets. With that, I had witnessed many positive as well as negative effects mobile technology was having on spouses and families. To combat some of those negative effects, a five-week seminar was created that enabled members to hear lectures, discuss, share, and implement principles to help them bring about positive changes in their family relationships.

Through a greater awareness, my goal was to help them see and combat issues such as constant distraction, social media and the false sense of intimacy, and time taken up using technology that could be spent in other ways. Apps that help with self-control and accountability were presented, as well as dangerous health risks and parental controls. Through these five meetings, the discussions, case studies, guest speaker, and videos, it was my hope that members of the Hendersonville Seventh-day Adventist

Church and any attendees from the external community could be better equipped to foster close interaction and daily living with their spouse and children, and with their God.

CHAPTER 5

NARRATIVE OF IMPLEMENTATION INTERVENTION

In the years since the introduction of the iPhone in 2007, more and more people of all ages have come to use mobile devices in ways that seem to be disruptive to conversation and family interaction. More recently, in the Hendersonville Seventh-day Adventist Church, I have observed growing numbers of people on their phones during a worship service, in Sabbath School, at school functions, and when I am visiting them in their homes. As a result, I created an educational seminar to try to confront the challenges mobile technology presents.

Seminar Objectives

The seminar is at the heart of this doctoral project. The idea of the seminar was to bring the participants greater awareness of the adverse effects that mobile technology (smartphones, laptops, and tablets) can have on family relationships, both between husband and wife, and with their children. Through an interactive, five-night seminar, my objectives were to: (a) create a greater awareness of the potential and real problems of mobile technology, (b) help them see the false intimacy that social media can create, (c) make them aware of how much time can be spent on mobile devices, (d) acquaint them with tools to better protect their family from health risks and dangers, (e) make them aware of best practices in managing mobile technology, (f) and lastly, to encourage support and accountability in an ongoing conversation in regards to mobile technology. With pre- and post-interviews with the participants, the goal was to see if a seminar could

move the needle in a positive direction toward less indiscriminate use and more responsible use of mobile technology.

Seminar Logistics

While content is important, logistical details including dates, times, childcare, venue, and advertising all play an important role in the overall success of a seminar.

Time and Date

The seminar was conducted on Tuesday nights starting October 24, 2017. Each evening we would begin at 6 o'clock with a simple supper in our fellowship hall. The seminar itself started at 6:30 PM and would typically run until 7:45 or 8 o'clock. At 6:28 PM, I would make my way to the front and announce to the group that we would be starting in 2 minutes, so if they wanted to get seconds before it was time to begin, now was the time. I also put them at ease each night by encouraging them to feel free to finish their supper as I began the seminar. I told them that it would not bother me as long as it would not bother them. With that said, I would stand up at 6:30 PM each night and begin my Keynote presentations.

Meals

The meals were simple, but tasty, and were put on by local church members who saw the value of the seminar. A group of about five individuals made very simple meals for the 40-50 people in attendance.

At the end of the serving table, we set out a basket where individuals going through line could make a monetary contribution to their meal. This worked very well. Families could then eat and visit around round tables in our fellowship hall. Having food

helped many come to the meetings, as it reduced one of the challenges to getting to the meeting on time.

Childcare

Students from nearby Fletcher Academy were asked to come and provide childcare for many of the families with children. This would enable parents to focus on the presentations and be more engaged in the table discussions. Two Fletcher students came each night. They were each promised a free meal as well as \$20 per night towards a mission trip they were saving for. Over the five nights, the church spent a total of \$200 for childcare. This expenditure offered a valuable service for families with children, as well as financial support for some of our students.

Advertising and Recruitment

This seminar was intended primarily for our church members, however, others from the community were invited to join us. It followed a full evangelistic campaign that had also taken place in our fellowship hall, so during the evangelistic meetings I advertised concerning the mobile technology and the family seminar with slides showing people staring at phones instead of each other to increase their interest in attending.

I also used slides to advertise the mobile technology seminar a few Sabbath mornings leading up to the seminar. These Keynote slides included times, dates, pictures, as well as bullet points of the objectives of the seminar. These advertising slides can be found in the appendix. We also advertised in my weekly newsletter, as well as in our bulletin.

Our largest attendance, however, came from those I personally contacted and asked to be part of this study. Within the Hendersonville Seventh-day Adventist Church

that I pastor, I personally spoke with many families to see if they would be interested in participating in this seminar, including the pre and post interviews, as part of my project. In my recruitment, I looked for couples and families that interacted with mobile technology on a regular basis. I also tried to get a wide range of ages and family types, everything from young couples, families with young children, families with teenage children, as well as some grandparents that have embraced mobile technology and use it often. I was able to recruit 11 families with the hope that at least six of those would carry all the way through with the process and be able to come to all the seminars.

Narrative of the Nightly Seminars

Session 1: Mobile Technology and the Family

Objectives

The objective of the first night was to create a clear picture of how much society and our lives have changed in the past 10 years because of mobile technology. We are often quick to accept such innovative technological devices as the new normal, but I wanted the class to pause and take an objective look at where we are presently, compared to just a decade ago. Some of the defining moments that got us to where we are today were highlighted.

One of my objectives was to assure them that this seminar was not an attempt to get individuals to get rid of the new mobile technology, but to get them to think about how to use it responsibly. The goal was to have them think objectively about how they were using mobile technology and to empower them to make good choices in regards to their closest relationships.

Presentation Summary

The session was introduced by showing multiple pictures of couples on dates and on their phones, children frustrated as their parents were distracted on their phones, meal times being hijacked by mobile technology, and the like. Some public domain comics that poke fun at the problems with mobile technology were also used to portray how society seems to be addicted to it. This was to help them relax about the problem, but also help them see that there was a problem. I asked our group if they could relate to any of the pictures, and across the room people were nodding their heads yes.

Rapid rise of mobile technology

The question was then posed, "How did we get here?" Pictures were quickly shown of some of the first laptops, dating back to 1980 and coming up to the present. The idea that Wi-Fi was not mainstream until 2004 was mentioned. There was also a history of pictures in regards to the evolution of the mobile phone, starting with the first "brick" models from 1973, the introduction of the Blackberry in 1999 as an email pager, as well as candy bar and flip phones with texting and picture-taking capabilities. However, the real game changer was when Steve Jobs introduced the first iPhone on June 29, 2007 (*"History of the iPhone,"* 2017, September 6). Then there was the introduction of the first iPad in 2010, and the iWatch after that (*"History of the iPhone,"* 2017). Having seen the impact of this mobile technology over many years, people tend to agree that the introduction of first iPhone was a landmark change in the phone industry and birthed all smartphones as we know them today.

Ten years later, there are millions of applications known as "apps" that can be powered by their smartphones and or tablets. A study was cited showing that more people

access the Internet on their smartphone than using any other medium. Other scholarship indicates that children of all ages now are interacting daily with mobile technology. All of this was intended to show just how different life is now in this age of mobile technology where one can be on-line anywhere, anytime. As a means for them to process the information, group discussion was also used in the seminar. More detail about this portion can be found in the following section (see **Small Group Discussion** below).

Benefits of mobile technology

There are also many ways that mobile technology has improved our lives, so the next portion of the seminar was dedicated to showing some of the benefits. One obvious advantage is that one can work from practically anywhere. As long as there is an Internet connection, the office can become mobile (Turkle, 2011). I also talked of how couples can stay in close communication when separated ("*Families using technology to remain close, study says,*" 2008), and how social media allows one to socialize and relax (Boyd, 2014). It also helps families coordinate busy and often changing schedules (Moscaritolo, 2012). Each of these benefits was expanded upon with practical examples.

Facetime (Apple's video-calling application) was also mentioned as another way to find joy through human connection (Hart & Frejd, 2013). Examples were given to show how families often use social media to set up private family sharing groups that can be fun and interactive. Increased accessibility for the impaired in the form of voice-activated technologies and larger type fonts was also highlighted (Mori & Harada, 2010). The presentation also pointed out Thompson (2013) observation that states that people are composing and consuming far more written words than ever before through social

media, email, on-line news and blogs, and how the repetition of information helps us remember various details about one another and brings people closer.

Negatives of mobile technology

At this point in the presentation, there was a shift to focus on the many negatives of mobile technology. Elmore and Cathy (2010) were quoted as saying we have created “a world that allows for high speed, constant connection, sedentary lifestyles, pitiful relational skills, and a large dose of narcissism” (p. 15). Elmore and Cathy (2010) go on to say that when people are connecting on their devices, they can often be completely oblivious to just about anything happening around them. I spent some time acting this out and providing examples of people who are physically present but mentally elsewhere. I shared some slides and statistics related to how we take our phones with us everywhere and can therefore be interrupted and distracted constantly.

A four-and-a-half-minute public domain video was then shared. It featured a young man named Tristan Harris who reveals from an insider perspective how all the big tech companies are working hard to get the consumer addicted to their apps, and to influence them to spend more time there and compulsively check-in (*60 Minutes*, 2017). It is rather eye-opening, and after watching this clip, I gave the group some time to discuss and process it.

More statistics and quotes were given in regards to how our attention span has shortened (Chapman & Pellicane, 2014), and how Americans collectively check their smartphones eight billion times a day (Eadicicco, 2015). It was shared that studies show how overuse of smartphones can lower one’s IQ (Asghar, 2014). Slides for all sessions are included in the Appendix.

Small Group Discussion

In the first small group discussion, participants were asked to talk about the changes in mobile technology in the last 10 years and how it has impacted their families. If they had been married long enough (10-plus years), how had mobile technology impacted their relationship with each other? After about five minutes discussing the first set of questions, various tables were asked to share with the larger group and a roaming microphone was used, so that the entire group could hear.

At a later point in the seminar, I asked the participants to compare their childhood to that of children today. How has mobile technology changed how parents and children interact? They were asked to talk about examples within their own family. Again, the participants were given five minutes to discuss the question at their tables, and then they were pulled back together and allowed to share with the larger group.

The purpose of asking both of these questions was to have the participants acknowledge from their own experience that things had changed in this area of mobile technology, rather than merely hearing me tell them that there had been a change.

Nightly Challenge

At the close of this first presentation, I challenged them to download an app called *DinnerMode*, and demonstrated how it is used. Basically, one can set it for a period of time while they eat, and if they pick up their phone off the table before the time is up, they lose the challenge. I also challenged them to have tech-free times and zones in their home and to create a basket into which all phones and tech go before meals or other designated times.

I concluded with the passage from 1 Thessalonians 5:21-22 and challenged them to test all things and keep what is good and to abstain from all that is evil. Then I gave them time to discuss what they had heard and what they were taking away from that night's presentation.

Session 2: Social Media and False Intimacy

Objectives

The second session's main objective was to point out the many dangers of social media and how it can create a false sense of intimacy within relationships. Certainly, social media can help people stay connected in positive ways and there are many examples of that. However, the purpose in this session was to help them discover and understand some of the negative underlying issues that exist in the world of social media.

Presentation Summary

In this presentation, I welcomed the participants back and asked them share their experience regarding the tech challenge from the previous week. A very brief review of Session 1's presentation followed, before getting into the social media realm more specifically.

Dangers of social media

To introduce this new topic, I showed the group a short, one-minute public domain video clip (*Tedx Talks*, 2014, Nov 10) that uses humor to describe how ridiculous we can be with social media. In that minute, everyone could see very clearly some of the problems with social media and how fake it truly can be. I then gave some statistics revealing how enormous Facebook is and what its future plans are for engaging the entire

planet. Through slides, I endeavored to contrast this virtual world with the real world.

Social science tells us we can only maintain 25-30 friends (Balswick & Balswick, 2007), not the thousands that people claim to have through social media.

Becoming aware of social pressures

I presented the insecurities that can develop through social media and the pressure to get “likes” (Hofmann, 2014). Non-verbal communication is vital to good face-to-face communication, and is an important component of a relationship that is missing from social media. We then watched a four-minute clip describing the fact that social media can be good if it helps us connect with people outside of the Internet, but if it is replacing face-to-face time, it creates more surface-level, shallow conversations (*Science Insider*, 2015). .

Restoring eye contact in communication

Spring-boarding off of the importance of non-verbal aspects of communication, eye-contact in relationships was emphasized. While cultural views on making eye contact vary, family psychologists continue to highlight it as the best way to convey love to the heart of one’s child (Chapman & Pellicane, 2014). Children and our spouses often want to see our eyes because that is the greatest indication of where our attention is. Yet sadly, one’s eyes are often fixed upon some device, instead of a living person in the room, a person who, in reality, probably means more to the individual than much of what distracts them on their devices.

Avoiding depressogenic aspects of social media

One part of the presentation that seemed to gain the most attention from participants was listening to the findings of Dr. Jean Twenge from a news interview. In that video interview, Twenge (2017) reports that when smartphones saturated the population by over 50%, there was a big spike in clinical depression (a 50% increase), as well as significant drops in time hanging out with friends, along with less dating, not getting enough sleep, and feeling more lonely (2017). The graphs of her information in this interview are startling, because the case seems so clearly linked to the advance of smartphones and how they are impacting our society today.

Deuteronomy 6:6-9 was discussed in closing. The heart of that verse is about passing down a spiritual heritage to one's children as they sit, walk, lie down, or get up. The verse is making plain that the things of God should be kept before one's children all throughout the day. That biblical idea was then contrasted with what seems to be taking that place in our lives. White (2001) says, "Parents should allow nothing to prevent them from giving to their children all the time that is necessary to make them understand what it means to obey and trust the Lord fully" (p. 474). In another place, White (1980, p. 211) challenges her readers:

Everything that can be done should be done to place ourselves and our children where we shall not see the iniquity that is practiced in the world. We should carefully guard the sight of our eyes and the hearing of our ears, so that these awful things shall not enter our minds.

Small Group Discussion

The groups often discussed various video clips or slides with those at their tables, allowing them a chance to share, validate, and interact with the information being presented.

For this particular presentation, the graphs of Twenge got the most discussion. Parents especially were concerned, but generally everyone felt that they had observed much of what these studies were revealing. Many committed or reaffirmed their stance on limiting media use in the home.

After giving groups about five minutes for table discussion, the entire group was called back together and asked for comments about what their table had discussed. This helped to bring about various angles of discussion and gave a broader scope to the discussion.

Nightly Challenge

The second nightly challenge was to establish times when social media would be allowed and other times when it would be banned. It was suggested that adults should set a timer for when to log out of social media. We also talked about ways parents could better monitor and set boundaries for their children, such as having only one device for social media.

Session 3: Theft of Family Time

Objectives

The main objective of the third session was to help participants discern how much time they were actually spending on their devices and evaluate for themselves if that was the best use of their time. This session was designed to be practical and put tools in their hands to better help them manage mobile technology.

Presentation Summary

After a quick summary of what we had covered thus far, and after asking how the challenges from the previous sessions were going, we started this session entitled “Theft of Family Time.”

Tracking time spent on mobile technology

I shared various studies that show the average adult is on their phone from an average of 2 hours and 51 minutes a day (“How much time do people spend?,” 2017) to possibly more like five hours a day (Perez, 2017). I also showed participants how to check their phones under the battery settings to see just how much time they had spent on their phone in the last 24 hours or last seven days. In “settings” one can also see which app they are using most by time and percentage. Most did not realize that they could check this, and many were surprised at the time they had spent on their devices.

One excuse often given as it relates to smartphone use is that the individual only uses their device for business and productivity. To counter this, I referenced a study done in Australia where time spent on mobile devices for “productivity” was only 4% (Smith, 2015) of total time spent using the device. The rest of the time was primarily for social or entertainment. However, we saw in the previous session that electronic social outlets are not nearly as effective in connecting us with people as face-to-face time. Another study was cited that showed that in 2015, app time had overtaken TV time for the first time in history (Riaz, 2015). All slides used in the presentation can be found in the Appendix.

From there we looked at what White (1903) states,

Recreation, when true to its name, re-creation, tends to strengthen and build up ... amusement, on the other hand, is sought for the sake of pleasure and is often carried

to excess; it absorbs the energies that are required for useful work and thus proves a hindrance to life's true success. (p. 207)

Following this quote, the word *amuse* was broken down. "Muse" means to think deeply about something, but with the "a-" prefix, it negates what follows. So, to be "amused" is to not think deeply.

When isolating the range of 8-18 year-olds, it was found that this age group spends seven hours a day or 49 hours a week on entertainment media (Cloninger & Strembicki, 2013), which significantly limits family, exercise, sleep, work or study. However, this problem is not reserved for only that age group. One study reported that the largest increase in smartphone use year-over-year is in the age segment of 55-64 year-olds (Bolton, 2016).

Treasuring mealtime

Studies were shown that show that children of families who regularly eat meals together are more likely to read, eat more healthfully, and are more likely to abstain from substance abuse and pre-marital sex, and less likely to be prone to suicidal tendencies (Chapman & Pellicane, 2014). Yet sadly, another study reveals that one-third of parents use their devices continuously during meal times (Charles, 2014). As a result, there are numerous studies that show children will act out to get that much-needed attention. Some toddlers will throw their parent's smartphone on the floor or in the toilet because it is seen as the barrier to the attention they crave.

Avoiding dopamine addiction

In the seminar, I also used Brad Huddleston's work. Brad Huddleston is an author and motivational speaker who talks with parents and youth across the country about the dangers of smartphones and the Internet. In the seminar, I used a few public domain video clips and recordings in which he explains the dopamine hits one gets when receiving a text, or our phone pings. The participants watched as Huddleston (2016) explained that the problem with our devices is that we get addicted to those dopamine hits and have to constantly check our phone in hopes of another hit in the form of a thumbs-up, text, or email. Huddleston explains that scans of the brain show that the results from someone addicted to their phone and addicted to cocaine appear the same. Thus, the addiction with our smartphones is in fact a chemical addiction similar to other drug addictions.

Considering a digital fast

At this point in the presentation, the participants watched a 13-minute video on reasons to take a digital fast (*Tedx Talks*, 2017, Sept 28). In the video, Jeff Stern is very down to earth and very practical, and he speaks of his experience in taking a digital fast. Stern defines a digital fast as putting down all computers, smartphones, and iPads and experiencing life without technology. As a teacher, Stern often challenges his students to take a digital fast for a weekend and then write about their experience. The video was intended to get the participants to think about what they give up by having mobile technology and to challenge them to experience what life used to be like without it.

In conclusion, participants were asked to consider taking a digital fast for a period of time. Mark 6:31 speaks of Jesus inviting His disciples to a deserted place and resting a

while. Jesus modeled this behavior in Mark 1:35 as He often departed long before daylight to a solitary place to pray. Further, this is one of 11 places in the book of Mark where Jesus escapes for rest, solitude, prayer, and private conference with His disciples. With pictures and other Scripture quotes, participants were challenged to come apart, to be still and know that He is God. Participants were challenged to have regular conversations with family about how they feel and what they observe in regards to mobile technology. Parents were challenged to give their children real-life experiences together, instead of leaning on screen time.

In casting the vision, Jared and Ivanka Kushner's commitments were used as an example of a modern family breaking away from their devices. The Kushners' commit each week to not using their devices from sunset Friday night, to sunset Saturday night -- Sabbath -- and they describe how it has been such a great life decision for them (Van Meter, 2015).

Small Group Discussion

This time the discussion was focused on two areas in the presentation. The first was immediately after presenting Brad Huddleston's findings on how smartphones affect the brain similarly to cocaine, because I wanted participants to wrestle with that idea. Was his assessment too strong? Did it make sense?

The second time we paused for discussion was to talk about the idea of having a digital fast. I asked them to think about and discuss some questions at their tables. I asked them what things about doing a digital fast excited them? What were some of the obvious challenges? How could they make this work for a period of time, and what might that look like in their home?

Nightly Challenge

The nightly challenge was to install an app on their devices called *Moment* that keeps track of time spent on the device and allows one to set limits for oneself. Other apps were showcased, such as *Screentime* and *QuietTime*, with each respective promo video explaining how each works. All three of these apps seek to accomplish the same thing—limiting the amount of time one spends on their smartphone. The participants were encouraged to try them out and report back to their small groups the following week.

Session 4: Dangerous Health Risks and Preventions

Objectives

There certainly is a dark side to mobile technology, so this session was dedicated to exposing the hidden and not often talked about dangers and risks that mobile technology can bring into our lives. Beyond exposing the risks, this session sought to offer practical tools that can be used to keep individuals and their families safe.

Presentation Summary

The presentation began by welcoming the participants back and taking a few minutes to hear about their experience in downloading, using, and implementing the apps. Were they surprised at their smart phone usage? Where these apps helpful? If so, how?

Being aware of potential dangers of mobile technology

Following a brief dialogue with the participants as a group, we then jumped into the topic for that night on the dangerous health risks of mobile technology. Facts were put

on the screen related to pornography and how prevalent it is today, such as the facts that 70% of men age 18-24 visit pornographic sites in any given month and that one in three porn viewers are women (Saint & Gobry, 2011), how the average age for first exposure to pornography is 11 years-of-age (Randel & Sanchez, 2017), and that four out of five 16-year-old boys and girls regularly access porn on the Internet (Hsu, 2012). These statistics were alarming to the group.

We looked at the impact these negative media uses have on society in a case study shown through a public domain news clip of a sexting scandal that took place in Canon City, Colorado, in which hundreds of high school students were caught with nude photos of other students on hidden apps on their phone (*ABC News*, 2015). Then the question was posed, “Would we be naive to think that is not happening in our community, and at our schools?”

The group then viewed a public domain Brad Huddleson (2017) video in which he shares that while presenting to a high school he asked who had an open phone, meaning no Internet browsing restrictions, with an Internet connection available all night in their bedroom, and as viewers the class watched as almost every hand in a huge gymnasium went up. In the video, Huddleson recommends things like no mobile technology in the bedrooms and no smartphone as options for controlling this temptation. The participants then viewed a short news clip that talked of ditching the smartphone for a dumbphone, as well as the market that is emerging for such devices (*CBS Philly*, 2017).

The group was then taken to Mark 9:42 which states if anyone causes a child to stumble, they would be better off to have a large millstone placed around their neck and

be thrown into the sea. Slides of resources where help could be found were then presented to the group.

Ensuring Internet safety

The following two-thirds of the time was turned over to our local academy principal, Phil Wilhelm, to present on Internet safety and some of the things that parents can do to keep their children safe. He was asked to present because of his particular knowledge in this area having spent years searching for means and methods to keep the academy youth under his care safe. His slides are also in the appendix.

Encouraging normal healthy attitudes in children. In Wilhelm's approach, participants are encouraged to not only set up filters but also help the child develop a character that would help steer them away from the many pitfalls that exist. Wilhelm showed various methods to protect the children deemed innocent, curious, or desiring to remain pure. However, he pointed out that for the deviant, those bent on finding the negative things online, the boundaries will simply be a hurdle to find a way around. Protecting such children is much more difficult, if not impossible.

Putting filters in place. For families with smaller children, Wilhelm strongly recommended putting filters and boundaries in place before there is a problem. That way, when children start interacting with the Internet, these filters are part of their normal use, as opposed to them seeing the restrictions as a punishment and lack of trust. He also showed the participants how some of these filters work and how to use them.

Installing protection software. As far as protecting children, Wilhelm made a strong case and showed a promo for a device called Disney Circle that gives a parent the ability to monitor, regulate, pause and set time limits on all Wi-Fi devices in the home.

Many in our group were interested and had never heard of such a thing. He also took participants through parental controls in the Apple devices. He showed the restrictions that can be put in place and password protected that prohibit the downloading of new apps, Internet access, camera access and a variety of other aspects of the phone that can essentially be disabled. He also spoke of a feature on iPhone called “guided access” in which a child is locked into a specific app and must have the parent’s password to exit the app. Unfortunately, these safety measures at the time of this project were only offered on the iPhone and not on Android or Windows devices. He mentioned some other protection software as well as search engines that were kid-safe.

Small Group Discussion

With so much to cover, there were no scheduled discussions in this session. However, people stayed by afterward for quite some time to talk more about this topic, the resources that they had just become aware of, and how they could implement these ideas in their home.

Nightly Challenge

The challenge for this session was simply to look at their current Internet usage and what they could do to better protect their children, not just with hardware or software, but in having open and honest conversations often with their kids about the dangers of the Internet.

Session 5: Best Practices

Objectives

The objective of this final session of the seminar was to review briefly where we had been and help them think a little more about how they interact with mobile technology. What simple changes could they make that would have a big impact on their lives and those relationships closest to them? This presentation gave very little new information, but was intended to compel them to implement what they had learned.

Presentation Summary

To begin, some of the prior lectures were summarized in brief. The summary was limited to 11 slides, only spending a few seconds on each slide. That was followed by a 17-minute *Ted Talk* by Triston Harris (*TED*, 2017). Harris was a former Google Design Ethicist commissioned to create a framework for steering the thoughts and opinions of billions of people through screens. In his talk, Harris describes how there are a handful of people at a handful of companies controlling our thoughts and emotions on any given day. He speaks of how mobile technology is constantly vying for our attention, and describes the various challenges that creates in our lives. Then Harris brainstorms about the various possibilities of how mobile technology could be designed to help people accomplish the things they want to, connect with the people they want to, in ways they want to.

At the conclusion of the video segment, participants were introduced to Harris's new website (Harris, 2017). At his website, there are many recommendations on taking back control of our phones. All the recommendations are surprisingly simple and easy to do. Harris suggests changing our home screen so that mindless choices are a few swipes

away. Another suggestion is to force ourselves to type in the name of certain apps so we do not just mindlessly open them reflexively. One can easily disable notifications.

Charging one's device outside the bedroom is also recommended so it is not the first thing in the morning or last thing at night that one devotes time to. Harris also suggested some apps that help with distraction or keeping one accountable and on task.

Three clever public domain videos were then viewed by participants. They all came from Harris's site and spoke of how mobile technology could be reinvented (Harris, 2017). The first short video gave ideas of how mobile technology could be used to protect our focus instead of constantly letting others bulldoze our time. The second short video spoke of protecting time and how our mobile technology could be set up in such a way that we only spend the time specified up front on any given task on our phones. The last video showed how mobile technology could help protect our human values such as exercise, diet, or sleep. All of the videos were very thought-provoking and many participants were excited as they considered the possibilities of mobile technology. The biggest challenge for such a shift to take place would be for companies to start asking what is best for their consumers, rather than what is best for their bottom line.

Small Group Discussion

In this last seminar, participants were given two different case studies to read and discuss at their tables.

Case Study #1

Johnny is 17 years old and begged for a smartphone like all of his friends had. His parents gave in, but now regret it. Johnny used to be more engaged with the family in the daily commute to and from school, at the dinner table, and some in the evening before

bed. Now it seems that Johnny is on his phone all the time—texting, chatting, social media, pictures, games, you name it. His parents have tried talking to him about it, have asked him not to use it at the dinner table and family worship . . . but it still seems to be a constant battle. Every night, Johnny eats as quickly as he can so he can go back to his room and be on his phone. Johnny’s parents are at their wits’ end. They heard about this technology seminar you recently attended and are coming to you for advice. What would you tell them? Another close couple is there listening and they are about to get their 15-year-old daughter a smartphone for Christmas. What advice do you have for them?

Case Study #2

A young couple has been married now for seven years and they have two children. Life is very busy between work, raising the children, and being involved in their local church. At this phase in their life, adult conversation is at a premium. One time they used to catch was after putting the children in bed. Now they both get on their phones and conversation is intermittent and shallow. He has been at work all day and wants to unwind. She has been with the kids all day and wants to catch up with friends and family on social media. By the time they both decide to put their devices away, they are both tired and slip into bed. It seems they are in a rut and they find themselves drifting further and further apart. What advice would you have for this young couple?

As a group, they had to apply what they had learned over the course of the seminar to come up with solutions. How would they improve the situation? After some time in discussion, the small groups picked a spokesperson to share their findings with the larger group.

Nightly Challenge

The last challenge was more of an appeal. In that appeal, some of the best practices were reviewed and highlighted. The participants were reminded of apps that help them accomplish their goals, the importance of setting limits, the value of having regular family meals together, and the rewards of living in the moment. The future was theirs and they would ultimately decide how they would engage with mobile technology. They would choose which apps to have on their devices. They would choose what conversations needed to be had with their kids or spouse. With greater education on the topic, it was now up to them to choose how they would engage with mobile technology.

Waliszewski (2011) points out that the solution is not to run and hide, or move to some island, but rather reject the darker sides and prayerfully use mobile technology to better ourselves, our marriages, our families and the Kingdom for God's greater glory. The idea was not to throw out mobile technology, but as 1 Corinthians 10:31 reminds us, "whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God."

There are powerful tools and apps that exist to draw us closer in relationship to the Lord, from Bible memorization apps to powerful Bible software, audio sermons, self-help podcasts, Adult Sabbath School resources, and even the use of Facebook to share something uplifting, just to name a few. So mobile technology can be very helpful, but can also be very dark. The question becomes, how will one use it? The final challenge was from 1 Thessalonians 5:21-22, to "test all things; hold fast what is good. Abstain from every form of evil."

Before closing the final meeting and our time together, the floor was given to those who had a testimony to share of how this series of meetings had impacted them

personally, their marriage, or their family. Many spoke of the things they had learned, the practical solutions, and how they felt better equipped to handle the challenges presented by mobile technology. Others described trying a media fast for a weekend and greatly enjoying it. Some spoke of setting up greater boundaries for their children or accountability for themselves. It was rewarding to hear them share.

Before letting everyone go, the participants were part of a graduation in which pomp and circumstance was played and everyone was called forward to receive a certificate of completion and have a group picture together.

CHAPTER 6

PROJECT EVALUATION AND LEARNINGS

Project Summary

Mobile technology is having an ever-growing impact in the home. Not until recently did we have a device in our pocket that could send and receive email, text, share pictures, call, navigate, check the weather, and watch videos. As previously stated, in 2014 more Internet time was spent on mobile devices than on computers, which is a monumental shift that we are only beginning to see the effects of (Murtagh, 2014, Jul 28). What impact is this mobile technology shift having on our closest family relationship? Is mobile technology bringing spouses and children closer together, or are there important components of communication that are missing or being sabotaged?

To further address and educate on this topic, a ministry intervention was developed in the form of an educational seminar. For the sake of this project and for the gathering of information, families in the Hendersonville Church were hand-picked to be part of the seminar. Selection of participants was based on three criteria. First, I was looking for families that interacted regularly with mobile technology. Second, I was looking for families of all ages and scopes from grandparents to families with teenagers, as well as families with young children, or couples without children. Third, I needed the families to commit to coming to all the evening sessions. Each seminar consisted of presentation time, small group and large group discussion, and a challenge to be carried out the

following week. Pre- and post-interviews with the individual families in the research group enabled me to evaluate the effectiveness of the seminar.

What follows is the description of the means of data collection from the intervention as a way to measure the impact of the seminar and evaluate whether the seminar was able to change behavior, even slightly, in regard to mobile technology usage within the family. Along with the data is a report of the resulting conclusions and outcomes.

Description of the Evaluation Methodology

The evaluation method employed was to simply ask the same six questions before and after the five-part seminar to see if and how the answers might vary in light of participating in the seminar. All participants had to be present at all five of the weekly presentations to be part of the study.

The six questions were asked of the participating families in the following order:

1. What uses do your family members make of mobile technology (laptop, tablet, smartphone)?
2. How much time, would you estimate, does each member of your family spend on mobile technology on an average day?
3. How does the use of mobile technology in your family encourage or discourage family closeness?
4. How would you describe a perfect, or “best possible,” balance between mobile technology and family connection in your home?
5. Do you have guidelines as a family in regards to social media?

6. What measures have you taken to try to achieve balance and safety for your family in regards to mobile technology and how are those measures working out for your family?

These open-ended questions were used to determine how much time they spend interacting with mobile technology, how it impacts their family closeness, whether they have any guidelines, and what measures they may have taken to achieve balance and safety for their family. Comparison of pre- and post-seminar interview answers enable evaluation of the seminar's effectiveness in producing positive change as expressed by the participant. Did the participants move toward more responsible use of time (based on their own admission)? Did participants develop greater family closeness through use or non-use of mobile technology?

Outcomes of Intervention

Of the 11 families who constituted the research group initially and participated in the pre-session interview, only eight families attended all five sessions. I conducted the interviews at the Hendersonville Seventh-day Adventist Church behind closed doors for privacy. Family units were interviewed together without the children present if the family had children. All of their answers were recorded with as much detail as possible and who was making which comment. These interviews were typed and saved in a password protected computer again for their privacy. Due to the small size of the group, specific responses are not reported in Chapter 6 results. The pre- and post-session interviews of these eight families constitute the primary data for this project. I also took notes from reports the families gave in class, which provide supplemental data.

The following is a demographic description of the eight families surveyed:

1. Family 1 – father and mother with elementary son and daughter
2. Family 2 – grandfather and grandmother who raised a recently married granddaughter
3. Family 3 – mother with grown daughter and college age son
4. Family 4 – father and mother with four boys ranging from elementary to pre-school
5. Family 5 – father and mother with elementary daughter and a preschool son and daughter
6. Family 6 – father and mother with two preschool girls
7. Family 7 – father and mother with a teenage daughter and elementary son and daughter
8. Family 8 – father and mother with two elementary sons, one elementary daughter, and a preschool son

Only adults attended the seminar itself. Older children were left at home, and childcare was provided for the younger children. That was not a stipulation, but rather what most families chose to do.

The Pre-Seminar Interviews

While each family's interaction with technology was unique, certain themes became apparent. Each family significantly underestimated the time they spend each day on their smartphones. Most families had a positive view of the impacts of mobile technology in their initial statements, but I could also observe some frustrations as the interview continued. It seemed that many of the frustrations were simply accepted as if part of normal life. Everyone had also convinced themselves that they spent time on

mobile technology being productive, and they did not see themselves wasting their time on games or social media. For those with children old enough to desire to be on social media, no boundaries or accountability were in place. In fact, two-thirds of the families had no plan for accountability, or safety measures in place to protect their family, nor did they have any type of limits on their devices. However, each parent felt like they were monitoring their children's Internet activity and felt good about the measures they had taken. To summarize the findings, most families were grossly in the dark in their understanding of the hidden dangers that exist in mobile technology related to time spent, addiction, and content. As a result of the pre-interviews, it became very apparent that awareness of the issue and the underlying problems that can exist was perhaps the biggest need of our families.

The Post-Seminar Interviews

The post-seminar interviews were different in several ways. First, individuals knew far more precisely what their daily smartphone usage was, because of tracking tools and apps that we made them aware of in the seminar. Most were very surprised at how much time each day they actually spend on their smartphones. They also saw much more clearly how screen time on mobile technology can inhibit family connection and family time.

Many used some form of the same phrase, which was how eye-opening the seminar was and how it created a much greater awareness to the issue and the dangers and pitfalls that exist. As a result of the seminar, conversations were had about mobile technology usage and each family made some changes. A good number of the families incorporated accountability software and other technologies that monitor, limit, or

prohibit certain online activities. However, these families did so knowing full well that this is not a silver bullet to fix the problem, but just one of the many tools in the toolbox that can be used.

Comparing Pre and Post-Seminar Interviews

Themes

In comparing the pre- and post-interviews, one major theme that came to the surface in the pre-interviews was denial of the amount of time and level of addiction they had with mobile technology. As mentioned before, most of the families I interviewed did not see technology as a problem within their family or marriage, and for those that did see it as a problem, they believed it to be a small one. However, during the seminar and in the post-interviews, it became apparent that mobile technology was a larger problem than most wanted to admit. Some felt it made their young boys grumpy and caused them to block everyone else out. One father uses his smartphone extensively to run his small business and admitted that he wished his children never saw him with a smartphone in his hand, because it constantly disrupted family time. One mother complained about getting “stuck” on her device after wanting to simply check the weather. Other parents admitted to getting off of Facebook for periods of time, but that it never seemed to last, and always slowly crept back into their life.

Greater Awareness of Potential Problems

In the follow-up interviews, the most common response was greater awareness as to the seriousness of the problem. People were able to see more clearly how much time they were spending on their devices and many took greater, measurable precautions to

limit the time and content on their phones and Wi-Fi networks. Some deleted social media apps that were consuming large amounts of time. Others limited themselves to less than an hour a day on their device, and monitored it carefully. Some made their Wi-Fi networks safer by purchasing Disney Circle which allows a parent to customize and monitor every device in the house in regards to what type of things they can see and what will be blocked, as well as how much time they can spend on the Internet on their device and what times of the day the Internet is accessible. Others took off notifications or hid the time-wasting apps in places other than their home screen. Many felt empowered to do the things they knew they needed to, like banning technology from meal times, or church time. Several parents also said their children were too young to have technology, but many agreed about putting specific parameters in place before they came of age, so it would be seen as the norm rather than a punishment as a result of a problem.

Intervention Conclusions

In comparing the pre- and post-interviews of the participating families, the seminar seemed to challenge all participants to make some measured changes in how they interact with mobile technology.

Responsible Use of Time

Families were now able to see definitely how much time they were spending on their devices. Most were surprised by how much time was spent and took measures to decrease it. Some set limits on the maximum amount of time a day they allowed themselves on their smartphones and kept themselves accountable. Others made times such as meal time or before breakfast as no-tech times. Others set limits on locations

where no tech was allowed, such as the dinner table or in the bedroom. Some did a combination of both.

Encouraging Family Closeness

Some reevaluated their use of social media to stay close with friends and family and felt they should do more to connect in personal ways such as talk on the phone.

Others felt that if they could stay away from their phone in the presence of their children they would have deeper more meaningful connections with their kids. One individual set his family as the background to his phone as a reminder of his plan. One family said they are now much better about letting the phone go to voicemail or checking the text later, rather than letting it interrupt family times.

Adherence to Social Media Guidelines

In the nightly session on social media I exposed how the entire premise of the industry is to keep people on their app or website as long as possible, as well as the means they use to manipulate and even try to addict the user to keep the user's attention longer, even to his own detriment. Many in the post-interview mentioned this session, and how the videos by Triston Harrison that I showed were sobering and eye-opening. As a result, many participants got off of various social media platforms and made commitments to interact with media in a more controlled way. Some people adopted guidelines suggested in the seminar, such as setting a timer to limit social media interactions, or placing the app in a remote place on their device rather than on the home screen where notifications could grab them more easily.

Attention to Balance and Safety

Families who already had parameters felt justified in those parameters and most added a few new layers of accountability to what they were doing. Some decided to be stricter about no technology at meal times or family worship. Others installed accountability software on all their devices to be established as part of the culture of how they use the Internet in their home. Several installed a Disney Circle which allows parents to monitor their household Wi-Fi on many levels, as mentioned previously. Each of these were measurable means by which families were seeking greater balance and safety within their family.

Outcomes Summary

While the interview approach to evaluation did not provide objective or measured results, it did give valuable insights into the effectiveness of such a seminar to move family behavior regarding mobile technology in a positive direction, leading to healthier families and marriages. The data suggests that this style of approach, including the interactive seminar, round table discussion, sharing, and weekly challenges with some accountability allowed families to reflect on the impact of mobile technology in relation to their marriage and family as well as envision what their family could be with greater limits and intentionality.

While the data did indicate positive changes in each of the respective families, the ways that families will continue to develop and apply what they have learned in this seminar long term is beyond the scope of this study. However, a seed of greater awareness seems to have been sown, as families continue to share with me things they are finding in their own research on this topic, as new studies emerge. This seems to indicate that they are

seeing the issue more clearly and paying closer attention to how current technology trends make an impact on their home circle.

Reflections on the Project Process

In addition to the conclusions drawn from the data gathered in the interviews (Chapter 5), a brief summary of the biblical, theoretical, and methodological conclusions reached in Chapters 2, 3, and 4 will help formulate a set of overarching conclusions.

Biblical and Theological Learnings

As our Creator, God knew that humanity would need to rest, not just physically, but mentally from the pings and constant engagement with our mobile devices. That is why He gave us time each week to pull away from the stresses of life through the Sabbath. We find Jesus inviting His disciples to come apart for rest and refreshment (Mark 6:31). In our time, being still and knowing that He is God (Ps 46:10) often requires us to look at how we interact with mobile technology. Another principle we find in Scripture is developing a high level of self-control (Gal 5:23) and ruling one's spirit (Prov 16:3). We must pre-determine boundaries that make the best use of our limited time (John 9:4), and invest in our marriage and time with children, recognizing that "time squandered can never be recovered" (White, 2001, p. 123).

Scripture further counsels us to "test all things and hold fast that which is good" (1 Thess 5:21). Thus, we don't want to follow the old adage and throw out the baby with the bathwater. Technology is not inherently evil, but must be tested by biblical standards of what is true, noble, just, pure, lovely, of good report, and praiseworthy (Phil 4:8). As Christians, our love for Christ compels us to edify and glorify God (1 Cor 10:31) even in our use of mobile technology.

We also find biblical principles of taking responsibility in relationships and the parent's role of incorporating Bible teachings into the lives of their children through normal, daily activities as an outgrowth of their own religious experience (Deut 6:6-9). Mobile technology can help one accomplish this, or greatly distract and absorb large amounts of time that could be invested in passing on a spiritual heritage to one's children. Scripture also speaks very pointedly about guarding one's senses (Job 31:1) and how it is the parents' responsibility to correct (Prov 23:13) and chasten (Heb 12:6) their children in love rather than indulge them.

Based on these biblical principles, dealing with mobile technology is much like many other things. It requires complete abstinence from those things that are harmful and moderation of things that are beneficial. Through incorporating these biblical principles, by God's grace one can use mobile technology to draw one closer to those most important relationships instead of driving a wedge between them.

Theoretical Learnings

A review of the literature revealed both the benefits and pitfalls regarding mobile technology. A strong case is made in the literature for the convenience, work flexibility, greater ease and thus increase in communication that brings people closer through talking, texting, sharing pictures, and the like. There are also studies that cite brain benefits and higher GPA scores connected to Internet usage, and many feel it is because of the amount of reading and composing that is done daily now versus in times past.

Yet, there is a growing body of evidence that cites the negative impacts of mobile technology on relationships. This opposing view describes things such as being constantly distracted versus giving someone or something their full attention, theft of

family time during meals, commutes to school, just before bed or upon waking up.

Another proposed negative is the superficiality of social media, the lack of non-verbal communication, and how it creates what some call a false intimacy versus face-to-face in-depth conversation. Other studies argue that stimulation overload to the brain can significantly affect IQ. Of course, there are also the inherent addictive behaviors such as gambling, pornography, and gaming that are much more readily accessible.

From this, I concluded that one must take a balanced approach to this topic and recognize the good as well as the pitfalls the mobile technology presents. There is a need for a balanced approach to this topic that allows both sides to speak, be heard, as well as evaluate based on one's own usage and experience in relationship to mobile technology. These tensions force one to approach this topic with greater depth and complexity because both sides have valid points to make.

The literature review yielded an approach in which one must clearly see all pros and cons fairly, and then assess which practices apply to the individual and his usage, and if desired, adjust accordingly. The literature review was greatly helpful in that it backs up with measurable research what may appear to be dysfunction or benefit to a user. Looking at both sides of an issue creates greater awareness and enables one to make an informed decision about how they will choose to interact with mobile technology. The general theme of the literature review was that temperance, setting limits, and management of personal mobile technology seem to be the key to success.

Methodological Learnings

I felt very comfortable with the educational methodology used and found it to be helpful in this context. It gave me opportunity to engage with each family in a personal

and private way. While it took some time to conduct each of the interviews, the information seemed helpful as the process was not rigid but open ended. The lecture style along with some interaction and discussion seemed to work well, because people were not merely sharing their personal opinions but were able to respond to the information and research presented. This helped them further process the information and apply it to their own situations. The closing interviews gave a picture of what they took away from the seminar and also gave some insight into what worked well and what could be done differently next time. Better than a survey, the interview allows for some follow-up questions to be asked, and gives them the chance to ask for clarification if they are not sure what is being asked, and that is very helpful. There is also a tone to their answers that is not communicated on paper. The process seemed very straightforward and I would welcome such a process again in the future as a means to evaluate any seminar that I give.

Overarching Conclusions

Having reviewed the conclusions from Chapters 2, 3, and 4 with the interpretation of the data, there are three overarching conclusions as a result of the entire project.

First, my initial theory—that people are naïve to the severity of the problem that mobile technology poses on relationships in the home—was confirmed. Most everyone sees the great benefits of the Internet and how helpful these devices truly can be, yet few recognize how this always-on, always-available mentality is eroding relationships and face-to-face interaction. Left unchecked, it interrupts one's thought processes, one's conversations, one's family time, conversations with children during the morning commute, meal time, and pillow talk with one's spouse, just to name a few. A big part of

the problem is that people are in denial as to how much time they actually spend on their devices. Every one of the participants revealed in their post-interview that they had initially underestimated their daily time spent on mobile technology. Before the seminar, virtually everyone said that mobile technology posed no problems in their family, yet the longer they would talk in the pre-interview, the more I could see that it, in fact, did pose problems within family relationships, as they would complain of the constant disruption or lack of eye-contact during interactions. Parents also seemed to be naïve regarding the dangers that are so easily accessed on mobile devices, and as a result, few had any boundaries. To make any progress on this topic of the negative impacts of mobile technology on family relationships, the blinders had to be removed.

Second, it became apparent that few were really educated on the topic. While some were educated in areas, everyone in the seminar collectively seemed to agree that their eyes were opened in one way or another. Many were not aware that the creators and managers of social media make it addictive on purpose, or how a handful of people can manipulate and influence people's thoughts and opinions on a variety of topics through social media. While many knew of the dangers of pornography, most were not aware of the epidemic that exists and how mobile technology is the main way to access it. Further, much of the disturbing content can be found in many well-known apps and social network apps that most parents think are benign. Many were not aware of the correlation between smartphones becoming mainstream and a significant jump in incidence of depression. Exposing and educating individuals in areas such as these made marked impressions on those in attendance and a desire to make changes. A greater awareness of some of these and many other dangers and pitfalls was certainly a need as well as an

outcome of the seminar, and showed the necessity of having more conversations around this topic. By simple education, people felt empowered to make better decisions to influence better outcomes.

Third, despite many feelings of helplessness, there are specific things that individuals can do to combat many of the negative effects of mobile technology. Following the seminar, everyone expressed things they were doing to keep everyone, including adults, more accountable. Many of these measures centered around putting restrictions on their home Wi-Fi connections, Internet tracking software for teens and/or adults, setting limits in regards to time spent on their devices, tech-free zones and times, as well as social media boundaries. By providing greater awareness and some education, many parents were re-energized and empowered to make better decisions. As information was highlighted, exposed, and discussed, people were able to see how biblical principles can and should be applied to every area of life, including mobile technology.

Personal Transformation

This project certainly hits close to home, as this new technology has made full engagement on almost anything a challenge for me. Two changes are worthy of mention. The first is the freedom I have found by turning off all notifications on my phone, with the exception of text messages. Now I check email, the weather, financial apps, or any other app when I choose, rather than because there is a notification that I need to deal with. This has allowed me greater focus in my ministry, my family, and my relationship to my wife. It was very easy to do, but has been a game changer and I have not missed anything.

The second impact has been in the area of greater accountability for myself and our children. Our children are young enough now that they do not have devices or get online, but the day is rapidly approaching when they will and so I have put myself under monitoring software that one day my kids will be on. This will greatly enable me to explain that this is not just for them, but for anyone desiring to be faithful to God and their convictions in this present age, and show them that in our home, this is simply par for the course. Both of these relatively simple changes have given me greater peace of mind and have been a blessing for our family.

Recommendations

As a result of this seminar, a number of recommendations for further action have arisen.

1. With technology ever changing and with children's interaction with technology changing significantly over relatively short periods of time as they mature, this seminar would need to be presented often to help families reevaluate and renew their commitments. This would enable families to get out of technology what they desire and not fall into what can easily become an imbalance default mode that negatively impacts family relationships.

2. Since the preparation of the literature review, many new resources on this topic have become available. Evaluation and incorporation of these would make for a much stronger study. The literature review was done early on and many resources are just now coming to the forefront on this topic and will need to be evaluated and incorporated for a much stronger study.

3. With the further passage of time, longitudinal studies will be helpful to determine whether initial attitudinal changes at the end of the seminar translated into changed behavior.

4. With the rapid pace with which technology is evolving, this research is already dated. However, many of the principles could be applied to the ever-changing landscape of smart watches or whatever else the next big thing might be.

5. A comparison between generations before and after the smartphone technology would be interesting. Has it impacted relationship longevity?

6. At the time of this writing, some in the tech industry are calling for technology reform and trying to get something going with technology that has the user in mind. If this takes off, a study could be done between apps with this focus versus others. Are they effective?

7. Perhaps a sermon series could be developed around the main points of the seminar and the biblical principles that help us combat these most recent challenges.

8. A small sharing tract could be developed that could be easily distributed. Such a tract could address many of the issues that mobile technology presents and the biblical principles with which to meet them.

9. A parenting seminar could incorporate some of these findings so parents could be more intentional about giving their children their full attention at specific times.

A Final Word

Why is this topic important? Because one of the most valuable commodities we have is the use of our time. Mobile devices have great potential to save and maximize one's time, but there are also many opportunities for constant distraction. Left unchecked,

these always-on, Internet-based mobile devices keep our society from the intimate and deeply personal interactions with our spouse and children that profoundly make us who we are. However, with some real conversations, a little education, applying some biblical principles, setting up boundaries and accountability, mobile technology can be a wonderful tool to bring us closer to those we care about most. Virtue or vice? The answer depends on simple choices with big consequences.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX A

Advertising for the Technology and the Family Seminar

The following are advertisements placed in our weekly email newsletter for several weeks before the meeting.



Look familiar?

They are together...but what's the point? What impact is this having on you and your family? Come to our Technology and the Family Seminar and be inspired to reclaim your family time.

WE START THIS TUESDAY

- What nights? Tuesday nights from 6:30-8pm (maybe 7:45)
- Is there food? YES! There will be a light supper every night for a donation.
- Is there childcare? YES.
- Who will be presenting? David Wright
- What dates? Oct 24, 31, Nov 7, 21, 28, Dec 5 (no meeting Nov 14 as I will be out of town for meetings)
- What are the topics?
 - Pros & Cons of Mobile Technology
 - Constant Distraction and the Effects on the Brain
 - The False Intimacy of Social Media
 - Technology and Time
 - Best Practices in Managing Technology
 - Dangerous Health Risks
- What will be the format?
 - Presentation mixed with small group discussion and dialogue. The goal is for this to be a very practical seminar in which you are given opportunities to apply what you learn to your family setting and talk with others about the challenges you are facing, what has worked well, and what could be done better.

Please join us. All are invited.



Technology and the Family Seminar

Does technology ever leave kids hanging? You there physically, but you are totally tuned out. How is this impacting your relationship with your children? With your wife?

In this seminar, we will look at the impacts of technology on those closest to you and seek to find ways to use technology in positive ways that glorify God.

- What nights? Tuesday nights from 6:30-8pm (maybe 7:45)
- Who will be presenting? David Wright
- What dates? Oct 24, 31, Nov 7, 21, 28, Dec 5 (no meeting Nov 14 as I will be out of town for meetings)
- What are the topics?

- Pros & Cons of Mobile Technology
- Constant Distraction and the Effects on the Brain
- The False Intimacy of Social Media
- Technology and Time
- Best Practices in Managing Technology
- Dangerous Health Risks
- What will be the format?
 - Presentation mixed with small group discussion and dialogue. The goal is for this to be a very practical seminar in which you are given opportunities to apply what you learn to your family setting and talk with others about the challenges you are facing, what has worked well, and what could be done better.

Please join us. All are invited.

Below is the bulletin insert that was used.

Technology and the Family

Tuesdays, 6pm Supper / 6:30pm Seminar

October 24, 31; November 7, 21, 28; Dec 5

This seminar will look at the impact of technology on the family and seek to find strategies to use technology in positive ways that glorify God. Some of the topics to be covered: The False Intimacy of Social Media, Dangerous Health Risks, Best Practices in Managing Technology, and much more. Child care will be provided.

APPENDIX B

Seminar Keynote Presentations

Title: Mobile Technology & the Family

Dates Presented:	Night #1	October 24, 2017
	Night #2	October 31, 2017
	Night #3	November 7, 2017
	Night #4	November 21, 2017
	Night #5	November 28, 2017

Location: Hendersonville Seventh-day Adventist Church

Time: 6 PM for supper
6 – 8 PM for seminar

Night 1



1



2



3



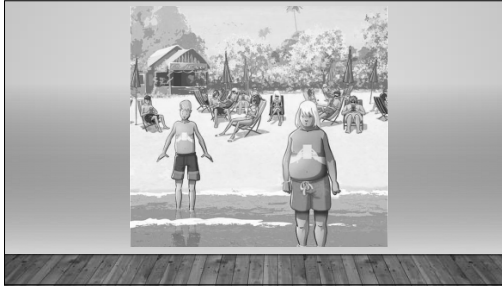
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First Laptop – 1980

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IBM Thinkpad – 1992

10



Toshiba Libretto - 1996

11



Dell - 2003

12



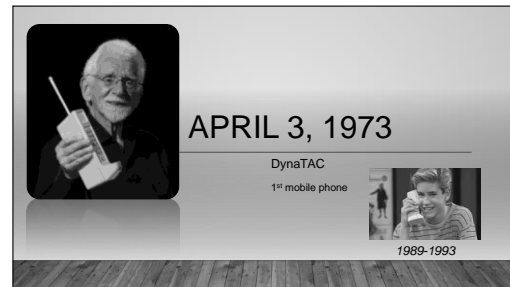
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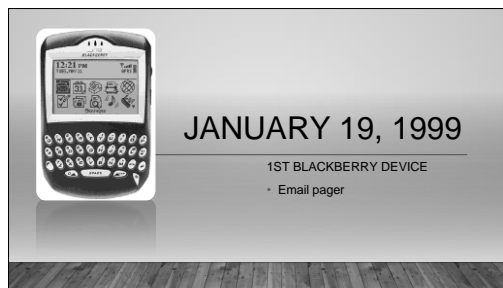
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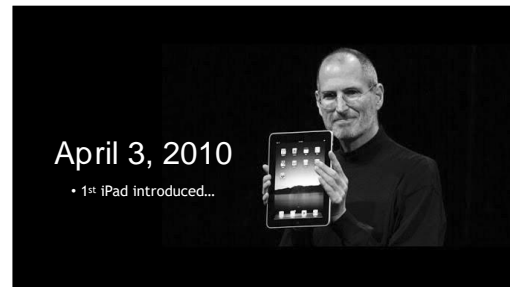
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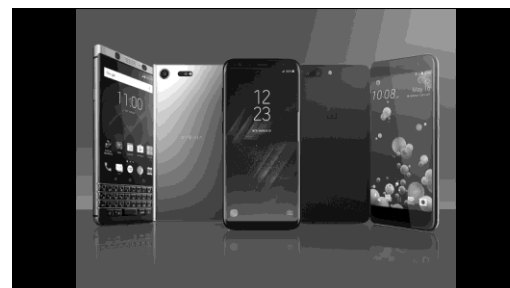
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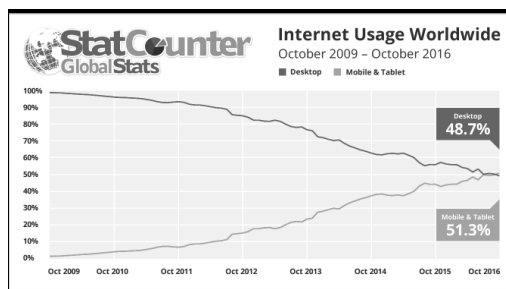
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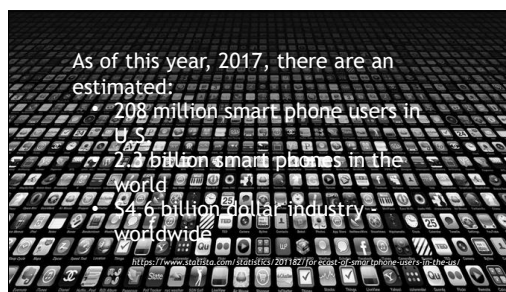
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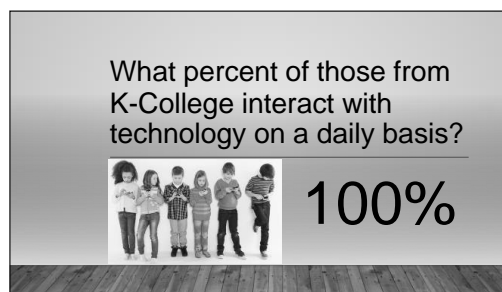
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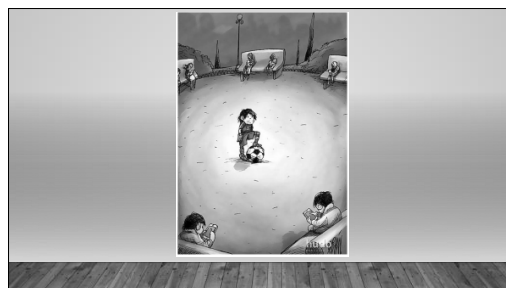
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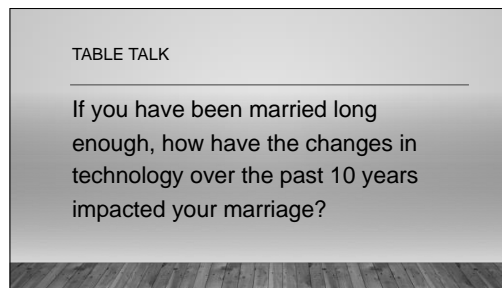
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TABLE TALK

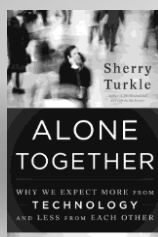
Compare your childhood to that of children today. How has mobile technology changed how parents and children interact? Talk about examples in your own family.

31

BENEFITS

OF MOBILE TECHNOLOGY

32



Today, smartphones can "make the most isolated outpost into a center of learning and economic activity"

pg. 152



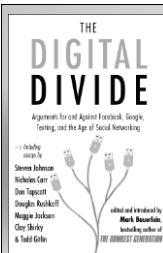
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The American School Board Journal,
2008

"When couples and families go their separate ways, the internet provides ways for them to stay in contact and helps them to feel close and connected throughout the day."

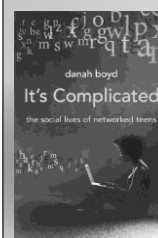
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Baurlein points out that social media "has allowed isolated people to communicate with one another and marginalized people to find one another."

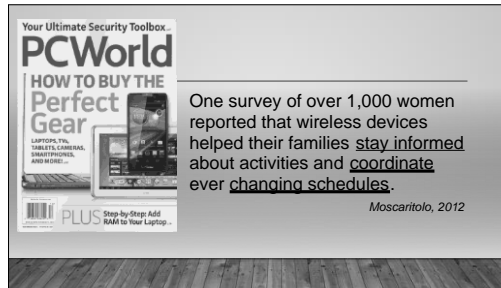
- p. 311

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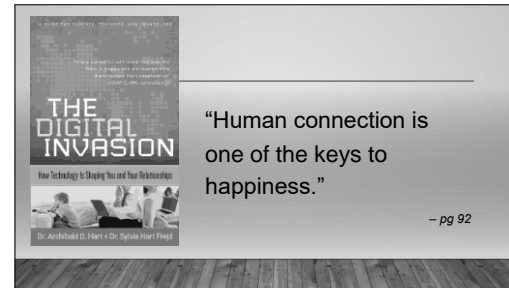


Boyd notes that teens have less freedom today to be outside in a safe environment and to socialize. She speaks of a time when teens only had to be home by dark and would often walk to and from school. Now, in a time when that is no longer typical, **social media** offers that outlet for teens to **socialize** and **relax**.

36



37



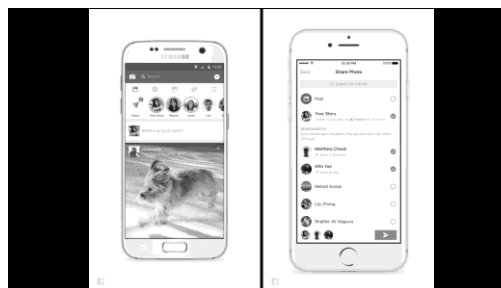
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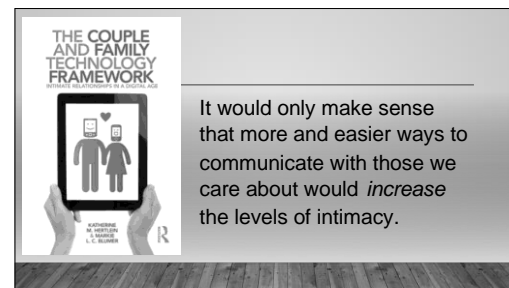
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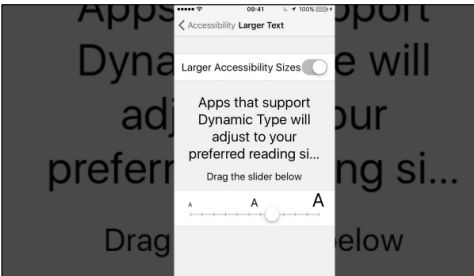
HELP FOR THE IMPAIRED



- Studies cited by Mori and Harada speak to the benefits of mobile technology on older generations for their ease of communicating. Now, mobile devices can be customized with **larger type**, voice commands, and greater ease of overall use.

Mori, K., & Harada, E. T. (2011). Is learning a foreign matter? Experimental study of the influence of social environment on learning by older adults in the use of mobile phones. *Japanese Psychological Research*, 52 (3), 244-255. doi: 10.1111/j.1469-8884.2010.00434.x

43



44

GREATER WORK FLEXIBILITY

- One now can work from home.
- When waiting for that all important email, rather than being tied to the computer, one can go on a bike ride with their kids.

• Jones, T. (2010, Sept 20). Overuse of technology may cause an unintended disconnect from your kids. Retrieved from <http://www.parents.com/tech/2010/09/18/overuse-of-technology-may-cause-unintended-disconnect-from-your-kids/>

45

GREATER WORK FLEXIBILITY

- There is certainly no doubt that smartphones, laptops, and tablets have all "increased flexibility" as well as "increased accessibility"

—(Crowe & Middleton, 2012, p. 561)


46

GREATER WORK FLEXIBILITY

- There is certainly no doubt that smartphones, laptops, and tablets have all "increased flexibility" as well as "increased accessibility"

—(Crowe & Middleton, 2012, p. 561)

47




BRAIN BENEFITS

- Studies claim that internet use is a real benefit to the brain because of the increase of communication.
- One such study found that children who spend an average of 30 minutes a day on the internet had "higher GPA's on average and higher standardized test scores and better reading scores"

Kraut, R. E., Bryn, M., & Kiesler, S. (2005). Computers, phones, and the internet domesticating information technology. Retrieved from <http://www.pewresearch.org/pubs/1000/computers-phones-and-the-internet-domesticating-information-technology>

48



BRAIN BENEFITS

CLIVE THOMPSON


SMARTER THAN
YOU THINK

HOW TECHNOLOGY IS ENHANCING
OUR BRAINS FOR THE BETTER

- One possible cause... the **vast amount of writing** that is done because of the internet.
- **Every day, in the United States alone we compose:**
 - 154 billion emails,
 - 500 million tweets on Twitter,
 - over 1 million blog posts
 - 1.3 million blog comments
- on Facebook, we write about 16 billion words per day”

— pp. 46, 47

49



BRAIN BENEFITS


CLIVE THOMPSON

SMARTER THAN
YOU THINK

HOW TECHNOLOGY IS ENHANCING
OUR BRAINS FOR THE BETTER

- Before the internet, people rarely composed anything after graduating from high school.
- In 1860 the average person in America wrote 5.15 letters a year—and we compose that now in a single day (Thomas, 2013).

50



BRAIN BENEFITS


CLIVE THOMPSON

SMARTER THAN
YOU THINK

HOW TECHNOLOGY IS ENHANCING
OUR BRAINS FOR THE BETTER

- The internet provides **more open communication** today between scholars, leaders, workers, friends, and family allowing for **greater collaboration**, and thus yielding better end results.

51



BRAIN BENEFITS

CLIVE THOMPSON

SMARTER THAN
YOU THINK

HOW TECHNOLOGY IS ENHANCING
OUR BRAINS FOR THE BETTER

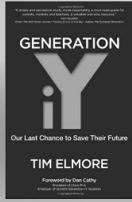
- Normally an individual can only recall about 20 percent of what they took in one month ago, but with the information being repeated and reviewed, one can greatly decrease the curve of loss.
- In the realm of social media, this translates to remembering people's names, things about them, and other details that can draw us closer and enable us to relate to them in greater and more meaningful ways.

52

NEGATIVES

OF MOBILE TECHNOLOGY

53



GENERATION iY

Our Last Chance to Save Their Future

TIM ELMORE

Foreword by Dan Cofey

- We have created “a world that allows for high speed, **constant connection**, **sedentary lifestyles**, **pitiful relational skills**, and a **large dose of narcissism**” — pg. 15

54

GENERATION
iY
Our Last Chance to Save Their Future
TIM ELMORE
Foreword by Ron Carey
Author of *The Hidden Power of the Adolescent*

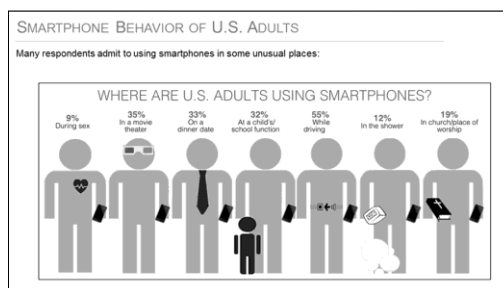
• While connecting to various outlets through one's device, one can be **completely oblivious** to almost anything happening around them.

55

HOW SMARTPHONES COULD BE RUINING YOUR RELATIONSHIP

We have to have our smartphone with us at all times...“the classroom, the bathroom, the bedroom, the outdoors – our phone is always in hand as if it were some magic self-defense tool capable of protecting us from all that is evil in the world”

56



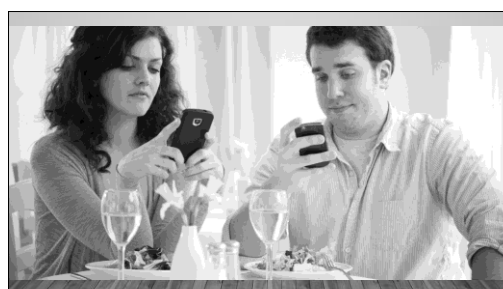
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A Lasting Promise
The Christian Guide to Fighting for Your Marriage
Scott Standley
Daniel Treadwell
Suzanne McCain
Matt Ryan

• With the massive changes in technology, one can be much more connected with everyone around them, while being less connected to one's most important relationships – their spouse and children.

- pg 171

58

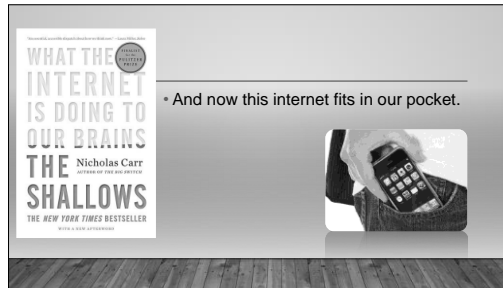


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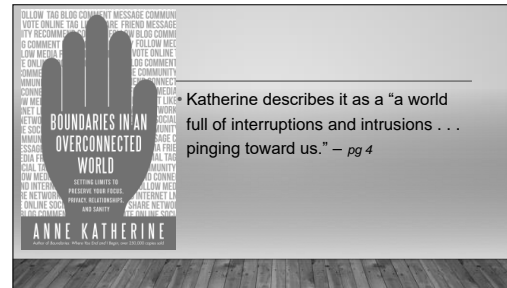
WHAT THE INTERNET IS DOING TO OUR BRAINS
THE SHALLOWS
Nicholas Carr
AUTHOR OF THE OLD FARTHER
THE NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER

• One challenge with the smartphone and other mobile technologies is “the feast the internet has laid before us; one course after another, each juicier than the last, with hardly a moment to catch our breath between bites.” - pg. 4

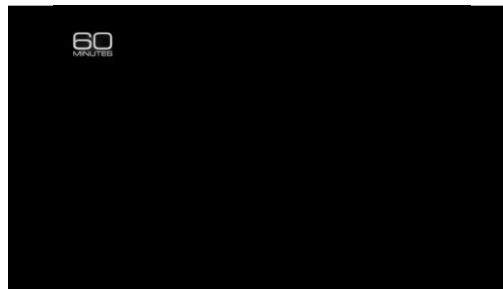
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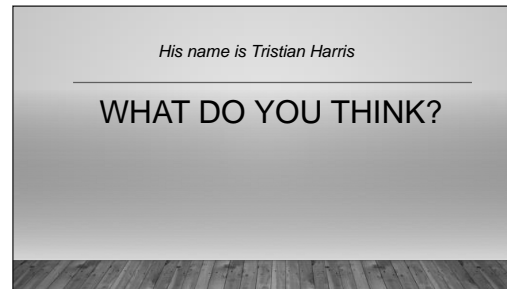
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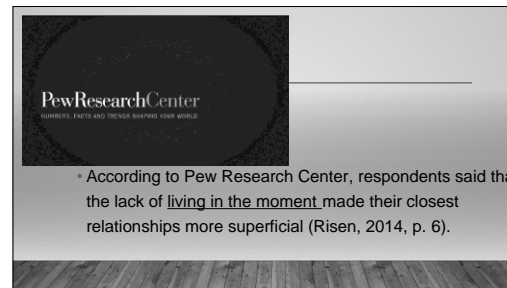
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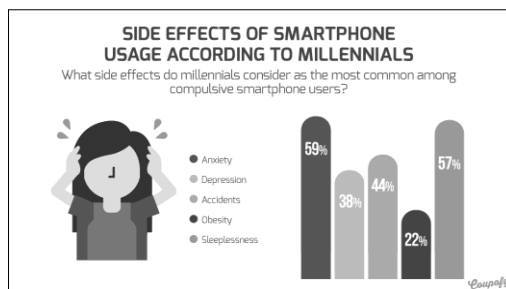
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67

• "We've never had a lifestyle that made screen communications the priority and made it acceptable behavior to ignore others"

68

• "One distracted person often distracts another. Often when one person is on their device, the other feels silly sitting there doing nothing, so they pull out their device often resulting in many people sharing the same space, but not present to each other in any way." - p. 105).

69

• "One of the **most validating and affirming** things we can do for another which is listening with understanding, listening with empathy, and reflecting accurately."

70



71

• Much of the parent-child relationship is centered on listening and validating a child's feelings. To listen well means using our eyes to watch for a child's "body language, facial expressions, and gestures" - pg 76

72



of the best-selling author of The 5 Love Languages
GARY CHAPMAN
ARLENE PELLICANE
growing up
social
raising relational kids in a screen-driven world

ATTENTION SPAN...
 "In 2000, before the smartphone existed, the average person's **attention span** was 12 seconds.
 By 2014, our attention span has dropped by 40 percent or just over 7 seconds."
 — pg 28


73



74



75




MULTITASKING

- Often in our attempt to multitask, we are neither present nor productive.
- While it is true that a digital friendly job allows one to work from anywhere at any time, that also presents the stress of every moment being a choice between the two.
- The biggest complaint of those that work from home is having their attention constantly divided.
- When we multitask, we miss out on the idea of "flow" which is when we get into a zone as if time stands still.

— Lapp, A. (2014, Jul 14). Parenting with smartphones.

76



CHECKING OUR PHONES

- Americans collectively check their smartphones upwards of 8 billion times per day.
- Those between the ages of:
 - 18-24 = 74 checks per day
 - 25-34 = 50 times per day
 - 35-44 = 35 times per day

Time Magazine, Dec 15, 2015


77



4 WAYS YOUR SMARTPHONE IS MAKING YOU DUMBER

1. Less sleep which lowers your IQ... sometimes as much as 10 points.
2. By reducing creative intelligence.
 - Free time allowing our mind to wonder gives us "A-ha" moments
 - giving our minds uninterrupted times

78



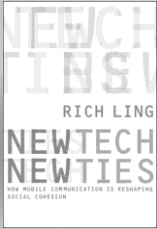
4 WAYS YOUR SMARTPHONE IS MAKING YOU DUMBER

3. By impairing or emotional and social intelligence.
Ability to talk to people in the line at the grocery store or have time for our own thoughts...

4. We are impairing our spiritual intelligence.


<https://www.forbes.com/sites/indraghat/2014/11/10/4-ways-your-smartphone-is-making-you-dumber/#5d3d6665702c>

79




When we multitask, one, if not both of the tasks suffer. — pg 194

80




Have you ever found that when you are on the phone while driving, you can more easily miss your exit, or similarly, when talking on the phone you can walk around a store twenty times?

81




Steyer flatly says that multitasking does not work and says that even hands-free headsets overload the brain with two streams of information at the same time impairing one's function.

82



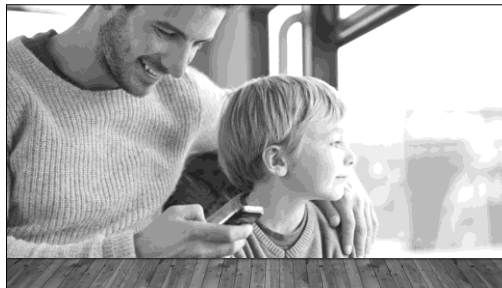
Parenting is about "monotasking," being patient, present, and undistracted so that a strong bond can be formed between parent and child.

83



Steyer emphasizes that parenting can't be done while keeping one eye on your phone.

84




85

“The New Relationship Edition of The 5 Love Languages”
GARY CHAPMAN
ARLENE PELLICANE

growing up social

raising relational kids in a screen-driven world



QUALITY TIME

- Quality time means your child has your undivided attention, and when a television, phone, or video game is present, he doesn't have that. — pg 143
- Too often kids hear "I'm sorry, honey, I can't do that right now." Upon receiving this response day after day one's child can begin to question the parent's love for them. — pg 146

86



87



88

OBJECTIVES OF THIS SEMINAR


- Awareness of the problem
- False Intimacy of Social Media
- The TIME factor
- Best Practices in Managing Mobile Technology

- How to Best Protect your Family From the Health Risks and Dangers
- Encourage support, accountability, and an ongoing conversation

89

1 THESSALONIANS 5:21–22

Test all things; hold fast what is good. Abstain from every form of evil.



90

TABLE TALK

Respond as a table about what you have just heard tonight?

- What jumps out at you?
- What do you disagree with?
- Is there anything you want to change?

91

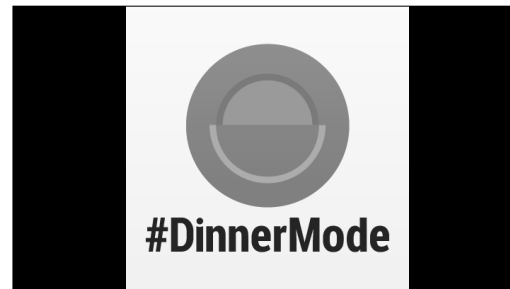
HOMEWORK CHALLENGE

LET'S GET PRACTICAL

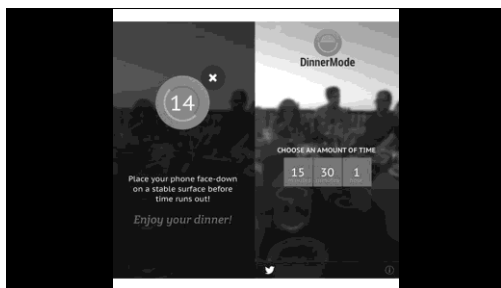
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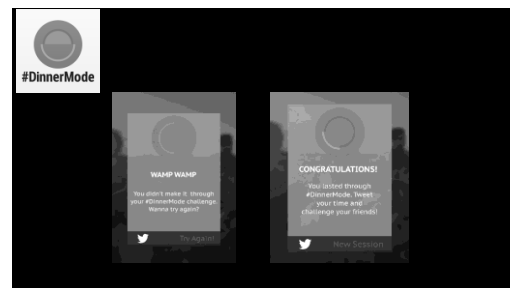
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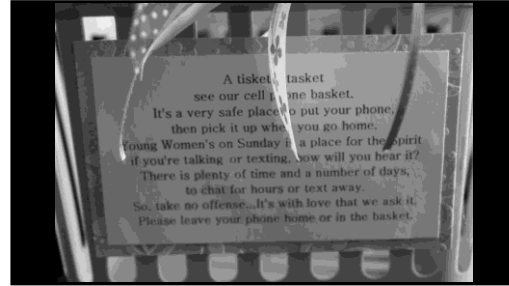
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Night 2



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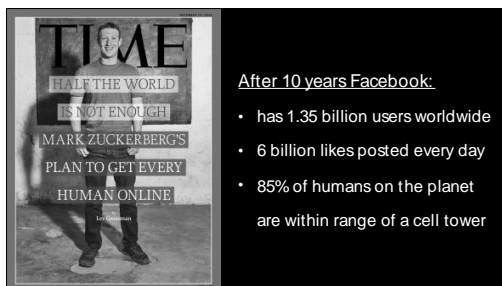
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9



10



After 10 years Facebook:

- has 1.35 billion users worldwide
- 6 billion likes posted every day
- 85% of humans on the planet are within range of a cell tower

11



Zuckerburg says in the article that in the next 10 years, he wants every person on the planet online.

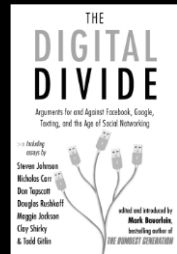
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"the average internet consumer spends 70% of their time building their personal relationships"

-WILDERMUTH AND VOGL-BAUER

13



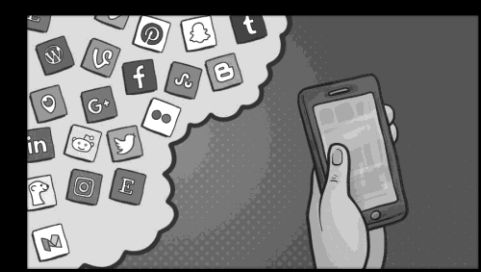
The old adage used to be "know thyself" is being replaced with a new adage, and that is "show thyself."

—MARK BAUERLEIN

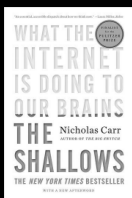
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16



The low-level rewards of the buzzing or pings of the phone give us low level rewards of dopamine and we can become addicted to these jolts. That is why people check there phones so often.

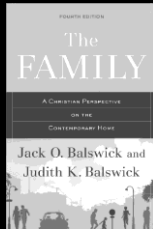
-NICOLAS CARR

17



Can social media provide individuals with the lasting connections they need to be fulfilled and secure?

18



Social science research tells us that the average individual is only able to maintain intimate relationships with a maximum of 25-30 people.

19



Social media can cause a great amount of dissatisfaction and insecurity as one looks through the posts and pictures of other people.

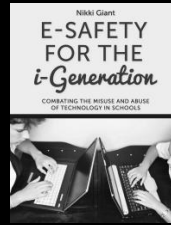
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When one girl posts a picture and gets 80 "likes" and another posts a picture of herself and only gets a few likes. Sadly, too many girls' self-esteem can be reduced to "likes."



21



Social media can lead to low self-esteem, lack of self-worth, and lack of self-respect.

22



"In the past, a parent would often monitor social interaction as a young person would call the house phone and might get a parent, and the parent could listen to half the conversation and keep tabs on what was going on."

-J. TAYLOR

23



Gives an example of a girl who decided to get rid of her Facebook account and felt like she had "weeded out all her fake friends."

24



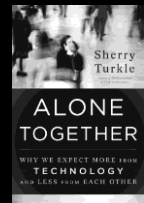
Many like the *control* aspect of social media because in the virtual world they can edit, delete, and retouch what they say and how they look.

25



While making social connections through a place like Facebook, the interactions are mainly superficial and impersonal and often lack the emotional investments we might find in a real friendship outside of social media.

26



We often fear the risks and disappointments of face-to-face interaction, so we turn to the safety of the digital world and in the process "we have come to expect more from technology and less from each other."



27



Social Media excuses all the nonverbal cues and allows us to communicate without accountability for the impact of our communication, because we cannot see the other person's face, note the impact and adjust our tone.

—CATHERINE STEINER-ADAIR



28



The result can be sending a text or email saying things we would never say in person often resulting in misunderstandings.

—CATHERINE STEINER-ADAIR



29

NON-VERBALS

- Eye Contact
- Facial Expression
- Tone of Voice
- Posture
- Gestures
- Timing
- Intensity



30



31

NON-VERBALS

- Eye Contact
- Facial Expression
- Tone of Voice
- Posture
- Gestures
- Timing
- Intensity

32



33

"Eye contact is one of the primary ways in which attachments are made between family members. Unfortunately, the screen is replacing this eye contact because either the parent, the child, or both are looking at a device instead."

- S. HUISMAN

34

"Looking into your child's eye with care is a powerful way to convey love from your heart to the heart of your child."

- GARY CHAPMAN & ARLENE PELLICANE

35

DR. JEAN TWENGE

- Dr. Twenge started doing research 25 years ago on generational difference, but when 2011-2012 hit, she saw something that would scare her to the core. This was the year that those having smartphones went over 50%.

36

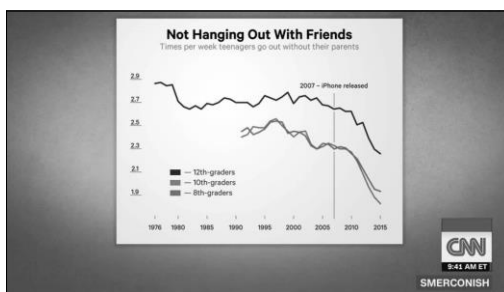


37

DR. JEAN TWENGE

- 2012 was the year that kids started to say they felt "sad, hopeless, useless...that they couldn't do anything right" = depression.
- They felt left out and lonely
- There is a 50% increase in clinical level depression between 2011-2015

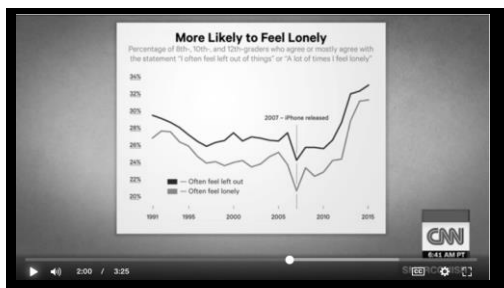
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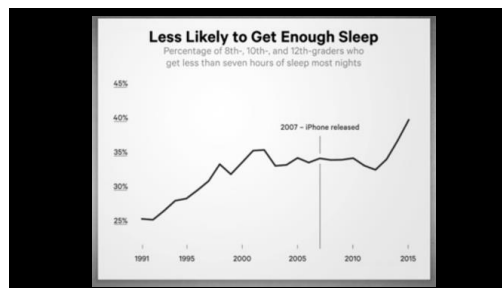
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41



42

"And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. 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. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates."

DEUTERONOMY 6:6-9

43

In Deut 6:7 the parents are told to "teach them diligently," by talking about the things of God when one sits, walks, lies down, or gets up. In essence, the instruction is to keep these things ever before one's children.

44

"Parents should allow *nothing* to prevent them from giving to their children all the time that is necessary to make them understand what it means to obey and trust the Lord fully"

CHILD GUIDANCE - 474

45

"Those who have children should so manage their domestic and business affairs that *nothing* may come in between them and the children that would lessen the parents' influence in directing them to Christ."

CHILD GUIDANCE - 474, 475

46

"Childhood and youth are the time to begin to store the mind, but not with the chips and dirt found in modern newspapers and sensational literature. The mind should be guarded carefully. Nothing should be allowed to enter that will harm or destroy its healthy vigor."

REVIEW AND HERALD - NOVEMBER 9, 1886

47

"And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. 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. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates."

DEUTERONOMY 6:6-9

48

"Everything that can be done should be done to place ourselves and our children where we shall not see the *iniquity* that is practiced in the world. We should carefully guard the sight of our eyes and the hearing of our ears, so that these awful things shall not enter our minds."

SELECTED MESSAGES VOL 3, 211

49

FOR NEXT WEEK...

HOMEWORK CHALLENGE

50



- Establish times when Social Media is allowed / banned
- Set a timer to log out
- As a parent, how could you better monitor you child's use
- Have a set device for social media only

51

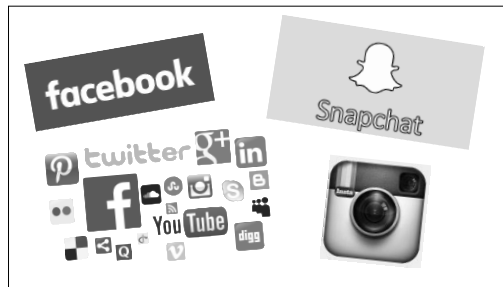
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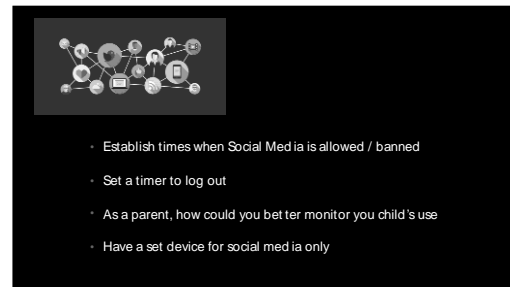
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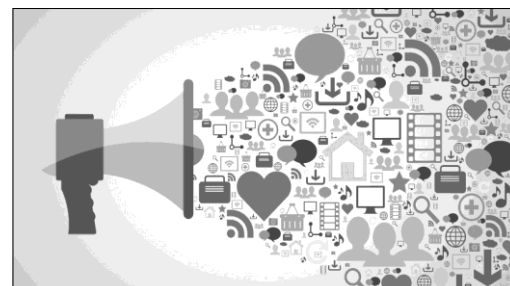
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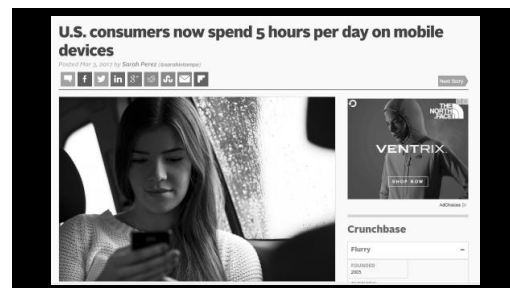
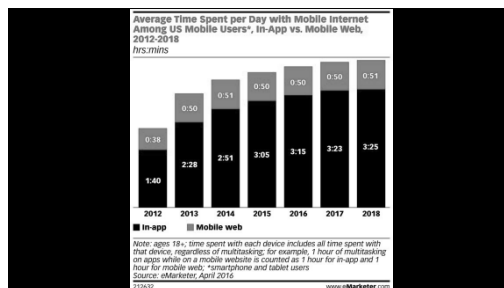
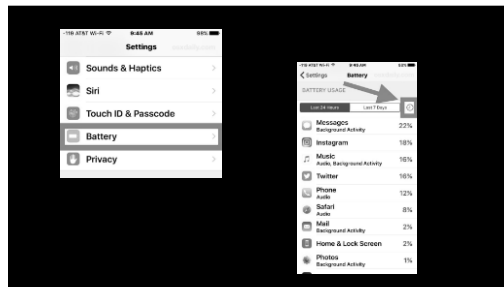
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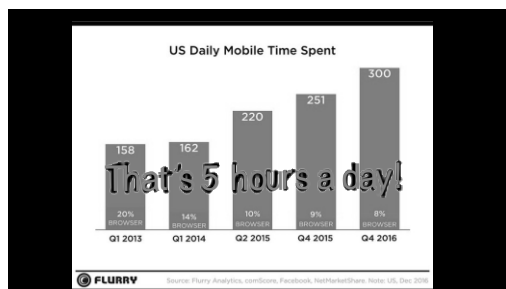


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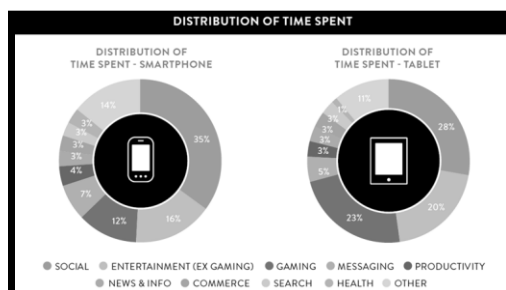
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* The Kaiser Family Foundation did a study of 8-18 year-olds and found that they spend an average of 7 hours a day on entertainment media which equates to 49 hours a week. (Conriner & Strembeck, 2013, Sept 12)

That is ten times more than they spend with their parents each week (McCarthy, 2013, p. 73).

All of that screen time means one's not exercising, getting together with friends, or talking with family. (Conriner & Strembeck, 2013, Sept 12).

20



21

"Recreation, when true to its name, re-creation, tends to strengthen and build up. Calling us aside from our ordinary cares and occupations, it affords refreshment for mind and body, and thus enables us to return with new vigor to the earnest work of life. Amusement, on the other hand, is sought for the sake of pleasure and is often carried to excess; it absorbs the energies that are required for useful work and thus proves a hindrance to life's true success."

—EDUCATION 207

22

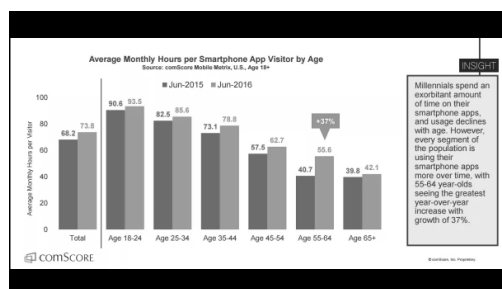
* Do you know what the word AMUSEMENT actually means?

* Amuse: A + Muse

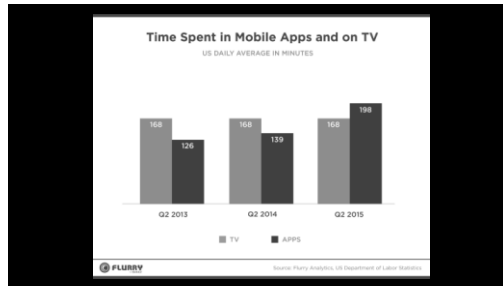
- * Muse = to think deeply or meditate on something
- * A = is a negation, as in "no" or "not"

* Amuse = to not think.

23



24



25

BOUNDARIES IN AN OVERCONNECTED WORLD

ANNE KATHERINE

All time must be pulled from somewhere, and more often than not it is pulled from family dinners, walks in the park, and intimate phone conversations.

-PG 180

26

growing up social

GARY CHAPMAN
ARLENE PELLICANE

"Spending time in real conversation is important. Research shows that when a family routinely eat meals together, the children spend more time on their homework, are more likely to read for pleasure, eat more healthfully, and are less likely to engage in future substance abuse, pre-marital sex or have suicidal tendencies."

GARY CHAPMAN & ARLENE PELLICANE • PG 119, 120

27

Unfortunately, according to one survey by Boston Medical Center, one-third of parents use their devices continuously throughout the meal.

(Charles, 2014, Mar 10).

28

One five-year study revealed feelings of jealousy and competition between children and their parents. It is not uncommon for children to act out in an effort to get their parents' attention.

29

That is why so many children throw their parent's phone in the toilet or try to smash it on the floor.

30



31



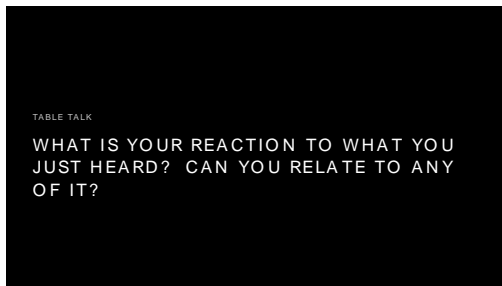
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35



36

TABLE TALK

WHAT ARE YOUR THOUGHTS
REGARDING A DIGITAL FAST?

WHAT TERMS WOULD YOU LIKE TO SET
WITH YOUR TECHNOLOGY?

37

And He said to them, "Come aside by yourselves to a deserted place and *rest a while*." For there were many coming and going, and they did not even have time to eat.

Mark 6:31



38

Now in the morning, having risen a long while before daylight, He went out and departed to a solitary place; and there He prayed.

Mark 1:35



39

Now after six days Jesus took Peter, James, and John, and led them up on a high mountain apart by themselves; and He was transfigured before them.

Mark 9:2



40

Again Jesus pulls away for prayer and asks his disciples to do the same.

Mark 14



41

In the book of Mark, there are 11 occasions where Jesus retired from his work, in order to:

- escape his enemies or
- to pray in solitude,
- for rest
- for private conference with his disciples



42

WHY DO WE NEED TO REST?

43

And He said to them, "Come aside by yourselves to a deserted place and *rest a while*." For there were many coming and going, and they did not even have time to eat.

Mark 6:31



44

Best " and know # at I am God

PSALM 46:10

45

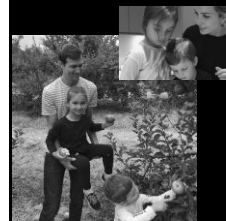
Be\$er a hand%l wi# quietness
& an bo# hands %", ' ge# er wi#
' il and grasping for # ewind.

ECCLESIASTES 4:6

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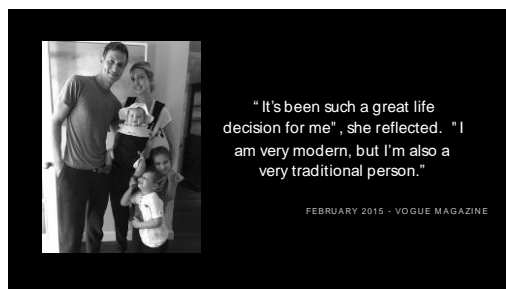


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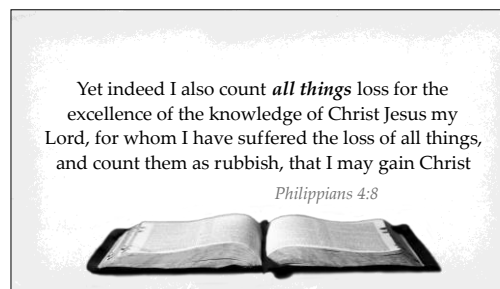


"From Friday night to Saturday night we don't do anything but hang out with one another. We don't make phone calls," Ivanka said. "It's an amazing thing when you're so connected to really sign off. And for [our daughter] Arabella to know that she has me, undivided one day a week? We don't do anything except play with each other, hang out with one another, go on walks together. Pure family time."

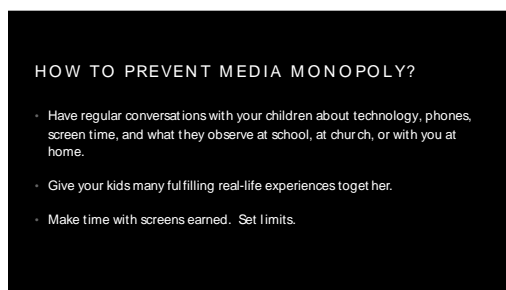
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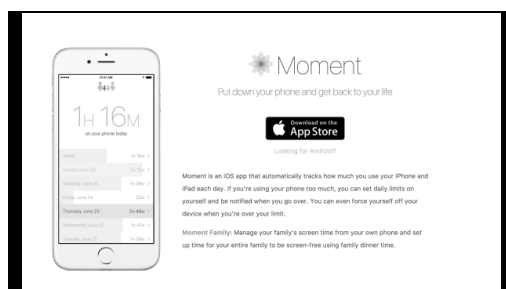
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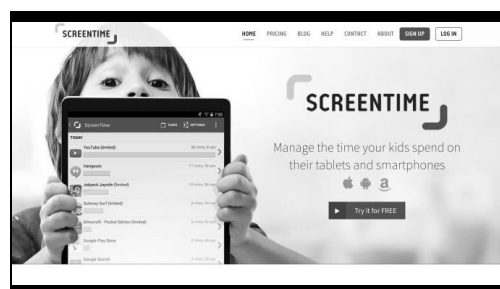
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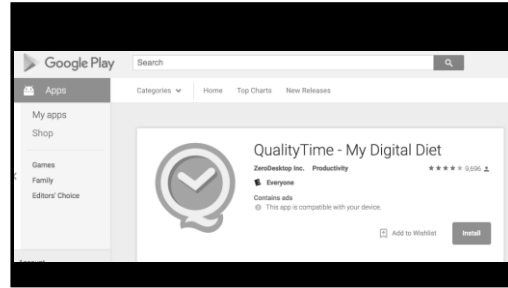
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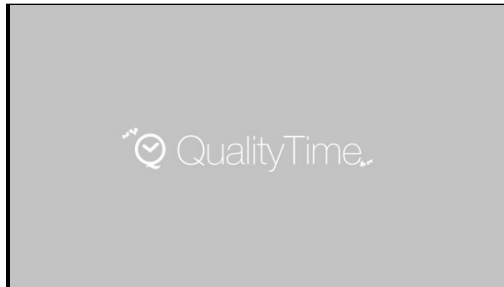
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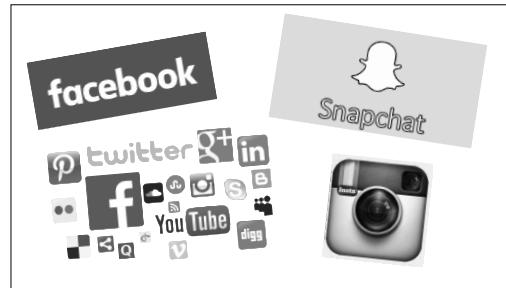


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Night 4



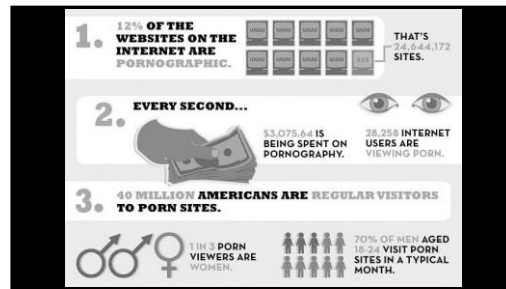
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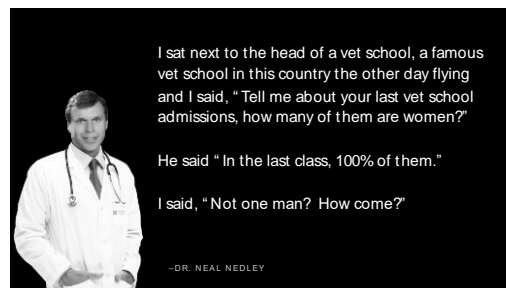
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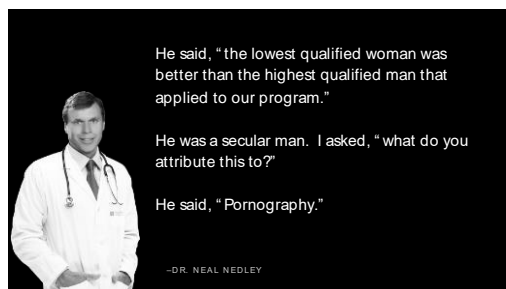
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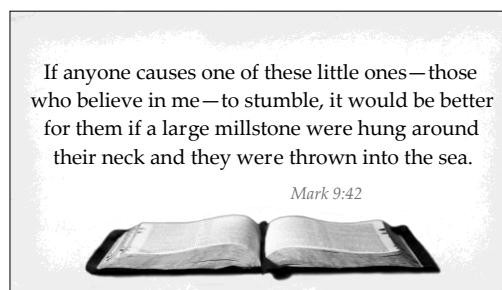
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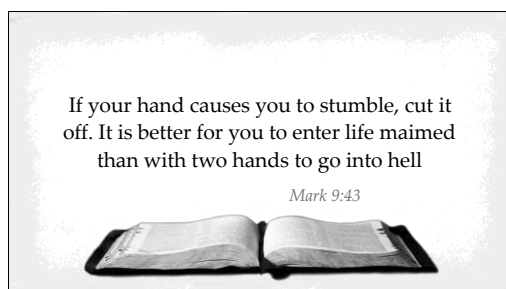
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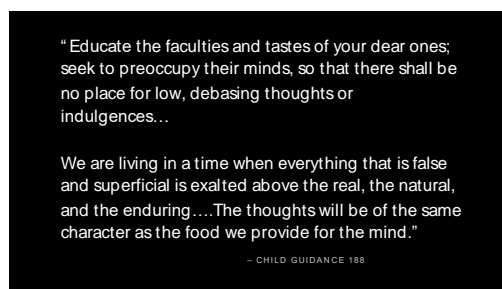
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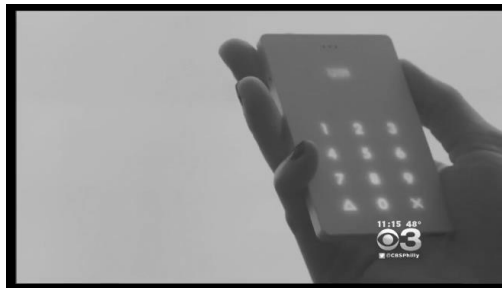
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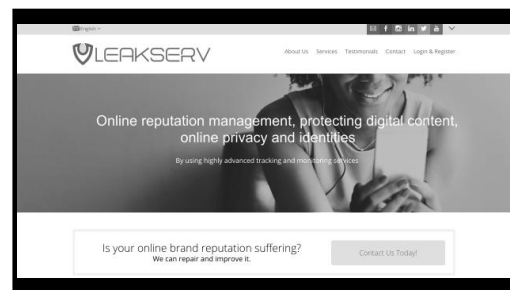
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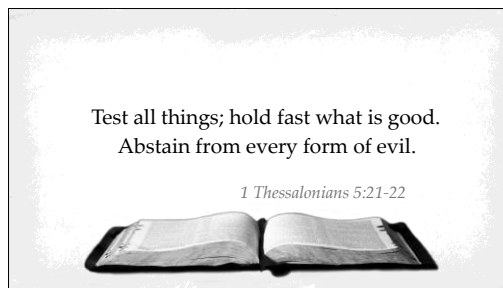
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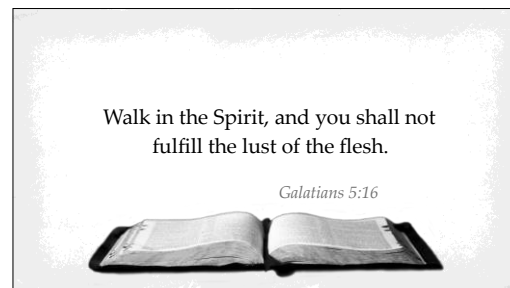
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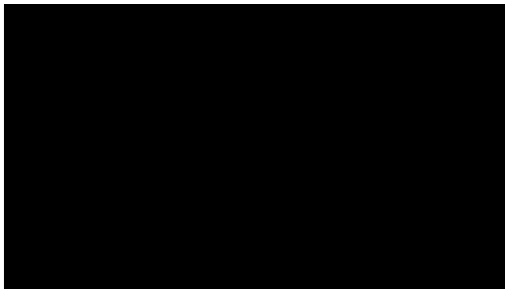
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18



19

Night 4 - Guest Presenter

Internet Safety

What is our responsibility?

November 21, 2017

1

Philosophy

Internet safety is much like road safety. You can set boundaries, discuss the rules, and watch very closely. However, your child should exercise good judgment and not misuse the privilege. As much attention needs to be given to developing that kind of character as is given to filtering!



2

The Problem

Then said he unto me, Son of man, hast thou seen what the ancients of the house of Israel do in the dark, every man in the chambers of his imagery? for they say, The LORD seeth us not

—Ezekiel 8:12



3

The Cause

Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:

—1 Peter 5:8



4

The Solution

But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.

—1 John 1:7



5

The Method

Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.

—Galatians 6:1



6

Three Groups Who can be Protected

The Innocent

The Curious

The Willing

7

Who are the Innocent?

Young children

Those with very limited exposure to popular music/ media

Those with no knowledge of the dark side of the internet.



8

Recommendations

Significantly limit exposure to all media (TV, movies, popular music, video games, and the internet)

Initiate a filtering plan for your home that will become commonplace.

Add restrictions to devices for occasional use.

Begin conversations on an age appropriate level about dangerous content.



9

Who are the Curious?

Those just gaining access to the internet

Those who have had accidental exposure

Those exploring social media for the first time



10

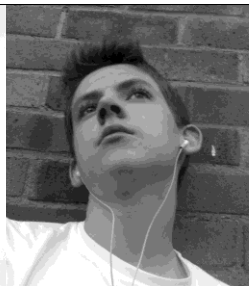
Recommendations

Give Satan credit for how he has impacted media.

Set boundaries collaboratively with your child

If accidental exposure has occurred, don't ignore it as an isolated event.

Discuss in greater detail the reasons for digital boundaries.



11

Who are the Willing?

Those who want to keep themselves pure

Teens and adults who acknowledge the danger of an open internet with no accountability

Those desiring to recover from internet addictions



12

Recommendations

Establish a family code of conduct based on agreed upon Biblical goals.

Ensure each member of the family has regular consistent honest accountability

Remove all avenues of prior access or put appropriate monitoring software/ hardware on all devices



13

What about the deviant?

Filtering is seen as a hurdle to overcome.

Accountability is another opportunity to be dishonest.

If one desires a way to access the darker side of the internet, it will be found.



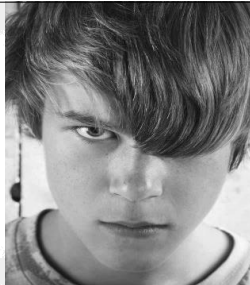
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Recommendations

Apply reasonable boundaries/ restrictions based on your desired code of conduct

Spend the majority of your time trying to reach the heart

Pray



15

What to Look for in a Filter

Filters at the router level (filters the wifi signal)

Offers reporting capability

Filters even when outside your home network (other wifi/ LTE)

16

OpenDNS

Free

Router Level Filter

Fairly decent filtering by category

Compatible with most routers

No Reporting

Does not work outside of home network



17

Circle with Disney


18



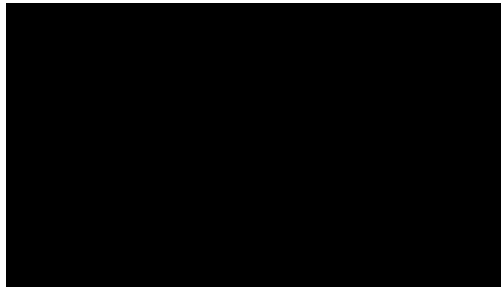
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Circle with Disney

- Around \$90 one-time purchase
- Easy setup
- Works with existing router
- Controls traffic on your home network
- Optional add-on for filtering mobile devices (called Circle Go @ \$4.99/ month 10 devices)
- Can be controlled remotely
- Internet "pause" button



20



21

Parental Controls for iOS

- Restrictions on iOS
- Guided Access



22

Wikipedia

- Wikipedia is *not* safe for unwary, unattended children. It is an encyclopedia that anyone can edit — which means, child molesters and other criminals can and probably do edit it from all over the world. We don't take ID cards, we don't run background checks, and we cannot guarantee that your child will not be led by some innocuous-sounding link to a website or to an in-person meeting with something a lot worse than sexual content. Just as sunscreen can increase the risk of skin cancer by blocking only the weaker light that causes sunburn, censoring Wikipedia could put children much *more* at risk by concealing the wide-open nature of our site.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Sexual_content/FAQ

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Youtube Kids

www.safesearchkids.com

24

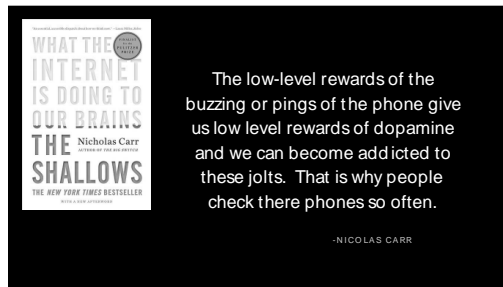
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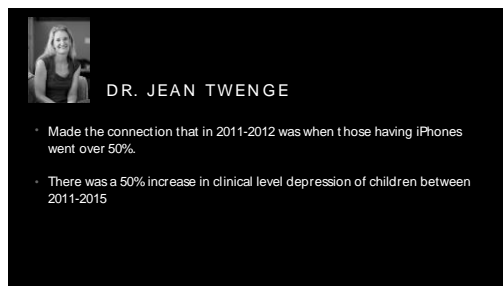
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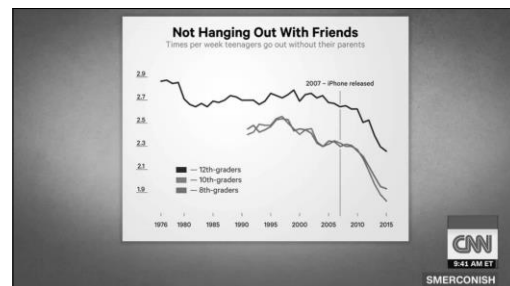
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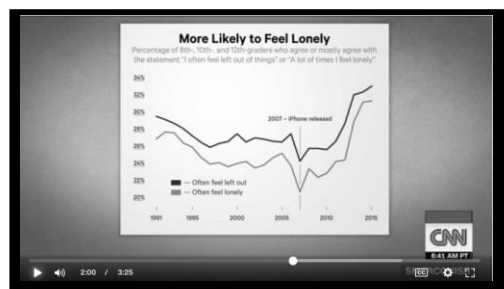
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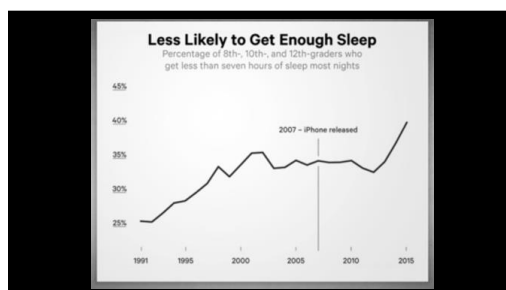
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12

Won't we just adapt? Four reasons why it's different this time.

People always worry that new technology will harm society. Four distinct forces make today different from anything in the past, including TV, radio, and computers:

Artificially Intelligent

No other media employed supercomputers to predict, a myriad steps ahead of our mind, what it could show to perfectly keep us on the screen.

24/7 Influence

No other media steered two billion people's thoughts 24/7 - checking 150 times per day, from the moment we wake up until we fall asleep.

Social Control

No other media redefined the terms of our social lives: self-esteem, when we believe we are missing out, and the perception that others agree with us.

Personalized

No other media used a precise, personalized profile of everything we've said, shared, clicked, and watched to influence our behavior at this scale.

www.timewellspent.io

13

Exponentially-growing platforms are easily exploited.

As content grows exponentially, platform companies rely increasingly on automation:

- YouTube automates billions of videos to play next for **1.5 billion users**.
- Facebook automates millions of ads shown to **2 billion users**.
- Twitter automates showing millions of #trending topics to hundreds of millions of users.

Unfortunately, these automatic algorithms are easily gamed to manipulate society at a massive scale, because platforms lack the capacity to reliably check for conspiracies, lies, and fake users.

The exponential growth of YouTube's content, based on publicly available data.

www.timewellspent.io

14

Profiting from the problem, platforms won't change on their own.

We can't expect attention-extraction companies like YouTube, Facebook, Snapchat, or Twitter to change, because it's against their business model.

Platforms would lose money if they solved the problem:

- Facebook would lose revenue if they blocked advertisers from micro-targeting lies and conspiracies to the people most likely to be persuaded.
- Twitter's stock price would fall if they were to remove the millions of bots on their platform, which academics estimate at 15% of their user base.
- Facebook would lose revenue if their tools didn't allow advertisers to automatically test millions of variations of content - word choices, color, images - to capture the most minds.

So we have to change the rules of the game.

www.timewellspent.io

15

Take control of your phone

Try these simple changes to live more intentionally with your devices right now.

Allow notifications from people, not machines.

Most notifications are from machines, not actual people. They keep our phones vibrating to lure us back into apps we don't really need to be in.

Visit **Settings > Notifications** and turn off all notifications except those from real people - apps like WhatsApp, FB Messenger or Messages.

www.timewellspent.io

16

Take control of your phone

Try these simple changes to live more intentionally with your devices right now.

Keep the tools, put mindless choices at a distance.

Do you open apps mindlessly because they are the first thing you see when you unlock your phone?

Limit your first page of apps to just tools - things you use for in-and-out tasks like Maps, Camera, Calendar, Notes, or Lyft. Move the rest of your apps off the first page and into folders.

www.timewellspent.io

17

Take control of your phone

Try these simple changes to live more intentionally with your devices right now.

Launch other apps by typing.

Swipe down and type the app you want to open instead of leaving bad habits on the home screen. Typing takes just enough effort to pause and ask, "do I really want to do this?"

On Android you can use the Search box on your home screen.

iOS: For best results, turn off Siri Suggestions (Settings > Siri & Search > Siri Suggestions to off)

www.timewellspent.io

18

Take control of your phone

Try these simple changes to live more intentionally with your devices right now.

100% Charged

Charge your device outside the bedroom.

Get a separate alarm clock in your bedroom, and charge your phone in another room (or on the other side of the room). This way, you can wake up without getting sucked into your phone before you even get out of bed.

www.timewellspent.io

19

Download apps and extensions that can help you live without distraction.

Sleep better

- Flux (Mac, Windows)**
Reclaim 15 mins of quality sleep by cutting the blue light from our screens.
- Turn on NightShift (iOS)**
Blue light from screens late at night tricks our body into believing it's still daytime, which disrupts our natural ability to sleep.

Stay focused

- AdBlock Plus (Chrome, Safari)**
Reclaim 30-40% of your attention with every article you read.
- InboxWhenReady (Email)**
Focus your inbox by only showing messages when you click "Show Inbox" instead of getting distracted as new emails arrive.
- Freedom (Mac & Windows)**
Temporarily block specific websites or apps on your desktop, tablet and phone for set periods of time.

www.timewellspent.io

20

See where your time goes

Moment (iOS)
See how much time you spend on your phone.

RescueTime (Mac, Windows)
See how much time you spend on different apps on your desktop along with various websites.

Respond quickly

- Gboard**
50% faster "swipe" typing than regular keyboards so you can respond to a message and get off your device more quickly.
- Send audio messages**
Recording a quick audio messages is often faster than typing, and lets many people send a more authentic message.

www.timewellspent.io

21

Youtube Kids

www.safesearchkids.com

22

23

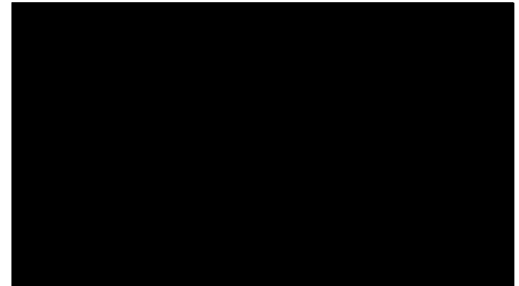
WHAT IF TECHNOLOGY PROTECTED YOUR FOCUS?

24



WHAT IF TECHNOLOGY WERE CONSCIOUS OF YOUR TIME?

25



26

BENEFITS

- Greater communication
- Work Flexibility
- Help for the impaired (*larger type, voice recognition, read things on the screen etc*)
- Brain composes and consumes more information
- Listening to Podcasts, sermons, books, music, etc.
- Convenience (online banking, keeping track of business mileage, air line travel, GPS, looking up store hours, sharing pictures, email, ordering things on Amazon)

27



NEGATIVES

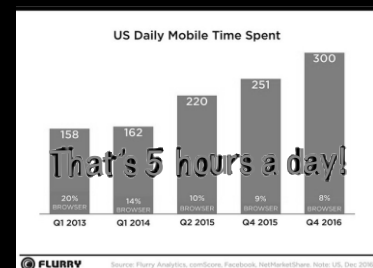
- Active listening more severely challenged
- Children rarely having their parents undivided attention
- Lack of "living in the moment"
- Rise of superficial communication

28

NEGATIVES

- Attention span getting shorter
- Impairing our spiritual intelligence
- Loss of the benefits and creativity found in mono-tasking
- Much higher risk of depression, anxiety, accidents, obesity and sleeplessness
- With less sleep there is a lowering of IQ....as much as 10 points.

29



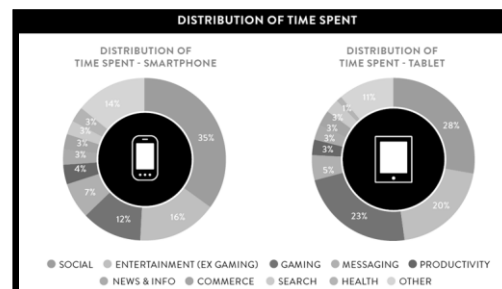
30

"The Kaiser Family Foundation did a study of 8-18 year-olds and found that they spend an average of 7 hours a day on entertainment media which equates to 49 hours a week (Croninger & Strembeck, 2013, Sept 12).

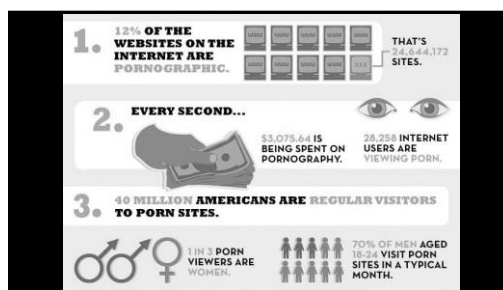
That is ten times more than they spend with their parents each week (McCarthy, 2013, p. 73).

All of that screen time means one's not exercising, getting together with friends, or talking with family. (Croninger & Strembeck, 2013, Sept 12).

31



32



33



34

Wikipedia

- Wikipedia is *not* safe for unwary, unattended children. It is an encyclopedia that anyone can edit — which means, child molesters and other criminals can and probably do edit it from all over the world. We don't take ID cards, we don't run background checks, and we cannot guarantee that your child will not be led by some innocuous-sounding link to a website or to an in-person meeting with something a lot worse than sexual content. Just as sunscreen can increase the risk of skin cancer by blocking only the weaker light that causes sunburn, censoring Wikipedia could put children much *more* at risk by concealing the wide-open nature of our site.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Sexual_content/FAQ

35

ADVENTISTREVIEW


Technology Addiction Among Risk Factors for Children, says Pediatric Psychologist

Children are at risk from factors including abuse, obesity and lack of education

By Curtis Jurek, Director of Communications & News Editor, Adventist Review

On May 14, the Adventist day of science research conference in Bangalore, Bangalore focused on topics ranging from health, science and religion. The central theme of the conference was "Science, Religion and Children's Education". The conference was held at the Adventist International Center of Health Sciences, Bangalore, India.


36



Randall also spoke to a controversial subject, the risk factor involving technology addiction. "Too much, or misused technology can impact a child's physical and mental health," she explained, leading to negative impacts such as sleep disturbances, depression and anxiety. To spontaneous applause from attendees, the pediatric psychologist challenged parents not to expose children under two years of age to technology. "It is wrong when technology is raising our children,"


DR. DR. KITI FREIER RANDALL
A PEDIATRIC NEURODEVELOPMENTAL PSYCHOLOGIST
LOMA LINDA UNIVERSITY HEALTH

37




BEST
PRACTICE

38



#DinnerMode


39



"Spending time in real conversation is important. Research shows that when a family routinely eat meals together, the children spend more time on their homework, are more likely to read for pleasure, eat more healthfully, and are less likely to engage in future substance abuse, pre-marital sex or have suicidal tendencies."

- GARY CHAPMAN & ARLENE PELLICANE - PG 119, 120


40



Unfortunately, according to one survey by Boston Medical Center, one-third of parents use their devices continuously throughout the meal.

(Chaffee, 2014, Mar 10)

41




BE INTENTIONAL


42

From this moment

- You will have to choose how, when, where, and how often they will engage with mobile technology
- choose what apps to have on their phones
- What conversations need to be had with your kids

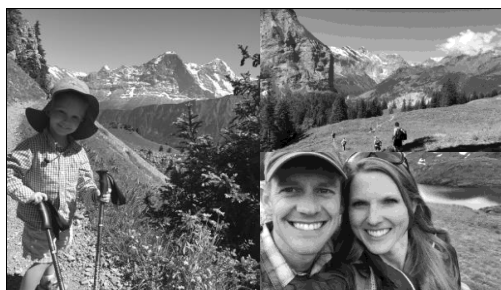


43



Our seconds make up our minutes...our minutes make up our hours...
our hours make up our days...and our days make up our lives.

44



45



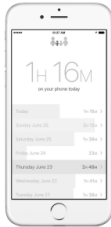
- Establish times when Social Media is allowed / banned
- Set a timer to log out
- Monitor you child's use and study up on the apps they are using
- Have a set device for social media only

46

HOW TO PREVENT MEDIA **MONOPOLY?**

- Have regular conversations with your children about technology, phones, screen time, and what they observe at school, at church, or with you at home.
- Give your kids many fulfilling real-life experiences together.
- Make time with screens earned.
- Set limits.

47



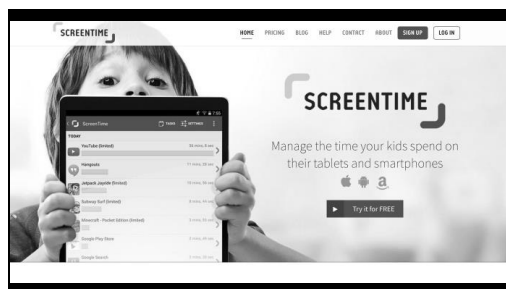
Moment
Put down your phone and get back to your life

Download on the App Store

Moment is an iOS app that automatically tracks how much you use your iPhone and iPad each day. If you're using your phone too much, you can set daily limits on yourself and be notified when you go over. You can even force yourself off your device when you're over your limit.

Moment Family: Manage your family's screen time from your own phone and set up time for your entire family to be screen-free using family dinner time.

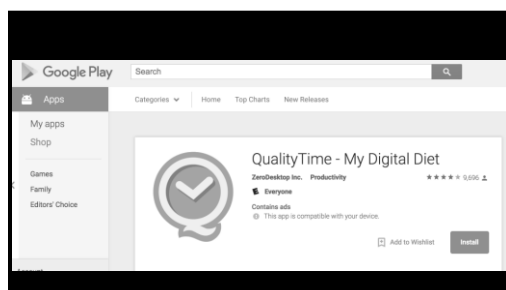
48



49



50




51



52

SAFEGUARDS:

- Don't allow an internet connection in the bedroom
- No smartphone is an option
- Restrict at the router level / phone level / with accountability software
- Have conversations often about why there needs to be digital boundaries
- Don't treat one instance as an isolated instance



53



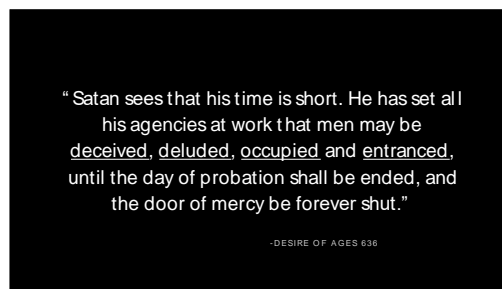
CASE STUDY #1

WHAT WOULD YOU DO?

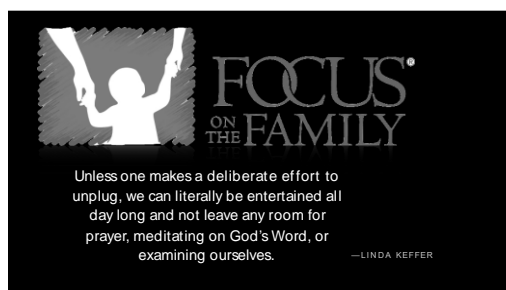
54



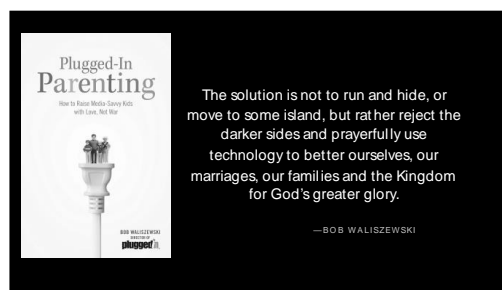
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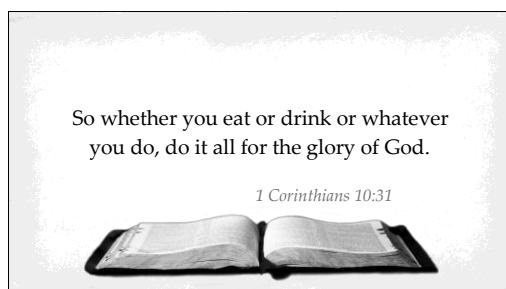
56



57



58



59



60

Test all things; hold fast what is good.
Abstain from every form of evil.

1 Thessalonians 5:21-22



61

"Those who have children should so manage their domestic and business affairs that *nothing* may come in between them and the children that would lessen the parents' influence in directing them to Christ."

CHILD GUIDANCE - 474, 475

62

"Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest."

Mark 6:31



63

And everyone who competes for the prize is **temperate in all things**.

1 Corinthians 9:25



64

I must work the works of Him who sent Me while it is day; the night is coming when no one can work.

John 9:4



65

5 QUESTIONS & TESTIMONIES

66



67

APPENDIX C

Certificate presented to those that completed the seminar.



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VITA

Name: David N. Wright

Date of Birth: February 24, 1979

Place of Birth: Akron, OH

Marital Status: Married to Elizabeth E. Wright (2003)

Children: Lauren (2007), Matthew (2009), Maryanne (2011) and James (2013)

Education:

2013 - 2019 Doctor of Ministry in Family Ministry, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI

2003-2007 Master of Divinity through InMinistry Program, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI

1998-2003 Bachelor of Arts in Theology, Minors in Biblical Languages and Business, Southern Adventist University, Collegedale, TN

Ordination:

2009 Ordination to the Seventh-day Adventist Gospel Ministry, Cleveland, GA

Experience:

2016-Present Head Pastor of the Hendersonville Seventh-day Adventist Church

2011-2016 Associate Pastor of Youth and Family Life of the Hendersonville Seventh-day Adventist Church

2007-2011 Pastor of the Blairsville & Cleveland Seventh-day Adventist Churches, Blairsville & Cleveland, GA

2003-2005 Pastor of the Center Grove Seventh-day Adventist Church, Rock Springs, GA as well as Associate Pastor of the Dalton, Seventh-day Adventist Church, Dalton, GA

2001-2003 Student Dean in Talge Hall, Southern Adventist University, Collegedale, TN

2000-2001 Resident Assistant in Talge Hall, Southern Adventist University, Collegedale, TN

1999-2000 Student Missionary teaching High School at the Pohnpei Seventh-day Adventist School, Pohnpei, Micronesia

1997-1998 Student Association President, Collegedale Academy, Collegedale, TN

