

“I’m fine, just busy...”
Lesson 6
De-“tech” yourself before you wreck yourself
Pro. 27:3

Intro: Remember the 90’s slang phrase- ***check yourself before you wreck yourself?***

It was said in a variety of context- two people on the verge of fighting, parents to teens who were rebelling, teachers to students, etc. It became popular in culture in a so many different mediums.

What did it mean? It was an exhortation to consider the consequences of your actions before you end up in trouble (maybe even that which was irreparable).

This week, we are talking about a subject we have broached twice already this year. We are coming back to it again because it is SO consuming and has perhaps the single greatest influence on our stewardship for a majority of those alive today.

The subject- the use of technology in our daily lives!

We are talking about navigating everyday decisions with technology from a practical perspective to accomplish the eternal goals of your home.

This involves the application of eternal principles we see explicitly in a context that has practical implications for our topic.

Consider Proverbs 27:3- For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he: Eat and drink, saith he to thee; but his heart is not with thee.

What we dwell or think upon (therefore what we allow to influence it) will ultimately shape belief, worldview, choice, and behavior.

Let us consider the impact of technology and reevaluate it’s control of our lives.

I. Technology (and its usage) is connected to our spirituality...it is not amoral.

- Technology is simply an extension of God’s creative act-Gen 2:18-20- God’s gift of creative ability given to humanity.
 - He gifted us the capacity to grow intellectually.
 - Each advancement gives rise to show another facet of His glory in doing so.
 - Each advancement also gives rise to numerous temptations and perversions.
 - Automobiles- moonshine.
 - Chemistry- mustard gas.
 - Print- lustful stories/pornography
- Consider how often and broadly God spoke of time, what we think upon, what we look upon, etc.-
 - Psalm 19:14- Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD, my strength, and my redeemer.
 - Job. 31:1- I made a covenant with mine eyes; why then should I think upon a maid?
 - Phil. 4:8- Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.

- Mt. 5:28- But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.
- **Neutrality is a myth!**
- **Proactivity is required-** For us (and our children if applicable), we are trying to help them make holy choices with content and use of time...no software can accomplish that.
- DO NOT apologize for loving your young people in your “rules” regarding technology usage EVEN IF it goes completely against societal norms.
 - Help them understand why and let them rest in the security of your love and wisdom EVEN IF mocked by others.
- Accountability is to be embraced, not shunned.
 - Pro. 28:1- The wicked flee when no man pursueth: but the righteous are bold as a lion.
 - Pro. 28:13- He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.
 - The idea of “privacy” and “trust” are often distorted and redefined by culture rather than the Bible.
 - Righteousness gives limitations to provide the ultimate freedom.
- How is stewarding the health of our kids/ourselves as emissaries of God? 1 Cor. 6:18-20
 - Kids to 5 years old- study published in 2022 demonstrated an overdevelopment in brain structure and underdevelopment- “The scans found accelerated maturation in certain basic areas, such as visual processing, but under-development in other higher-order areas that support more complex skills. Specifically, lower CT and SD have been linked to language development, reading skills and social skills such as complex memory encoding, empathy, and understanding facial and emotional expressions.”¹
 - Teens- For them, more screen time can be associated with higher anxiety, depression symptoms, lower quality of life, unhealthy diet, weight gain, lower psychological well-being, lower school functioning, lower academic achievement, lower self-esteem, poor language achievement, and poor math achievement.
But the results largely depend on what kind of media is being consumed.²
 - Adults-³ An article published this year by Stanford Medical connected screen time for adults to physical issues such as eye-strain, neck problems, memory loss, problem solving, decision making, and sleep difficulty.
 - “Passive screen time is like eating sugar but for your brain. It ‘tastes’ good, and you want it now, but you’re not actually feeding yourself. You’re not giving your brain any nutrition,” says Loeffler. “Instead, replace screen time with an intentional healthy habit that feeds your brain in a healthy way. Lifestyle medicine activities, like exercise, good sleep, social connection, and stress management, function like ‘nutrition’ for your brain and mental health.”
 - This article did not cover the mental wellbeing issues linked to screen time such as higher rates of anxiety and depression.⁴
- If the most valuable asset any human being can enjoy on this earth is time, how are we stewarding it?

¹ <https://scienceblog.cincinnatichildrens.org/screen-usage-linked-to-differences-in-brain-structure-in-young-children/>

² <https://health.choc.org/the-effects-of-screen-time-on-children-the-latest-research-parents-should-know/>

³ <https://longevity.stanford.edu/lifestyle/2024/05/30/what-excessive-screen-time-does-to-the-adult-brain/>

⁴ <https://health.osu.edu/health/mental-health/how-screen-time-affects-your-health>

- **James 4:13-17**- Go to now, ye that say, To day or to morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain: Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away. For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that. But now ye rejoice in your boastings: all such rejoicing is evil. Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.
- Every Sunday I am a bit sheepish...my screen time report goes of.
- What is your average screen time? A study updated in March, 2024 stated that the average American spends 7 hours and 3 minutes looking at a screen every day. With adults, this includes 2 hours and 23 minutes scrolling through social media channels, 1 hour and 25 minutes of streaming music, and 49 minutes of listening to podcasts. And the majority of this (3 hours and 50 minutes) is spent on mobiles.⁵
- Teens-Average Daily Screen Time⁶
 - Watching TV/Videos 3 hours 16 mins
 - Gaming 1 hour 46 mins
 - Social Media 1 hour 27 mins
 - Browsing Websites 51 mins
 - Other 29 mins
 - Video Chatting 20 mins
 - E-reading 15 mins
 - Content Creation 14 mins
- Child under five?- Ages 2 to 5 years: No more than one hour a day according to the American Academy of Pediatrics.
- We are hurting our health and wasting the gift of time...What are we actually seeking to escape by the amount of usage we currently have?
 - Marriage issues?
 - Work stress?
 - Demands of parenting?
- Remember...the primary function of the home is to display the Gospel inwardly first and outwardly to the community...bad stewardship of technology is harming and hindering that!

II. Why is it hard to de-tech yourself or your family members?

- It is easy to become habitual, even addicted to anything as a coping mechanism or escapism-
 - Ask- could you go a whole day without what is absolutely essential on your phone or without Youtube shorts or checking X?
- Faux Omniscience- God is all knowing and we are not...but tech provides the illusion that we can be or should be “in the know”.
 - Longing/training to stay connected or FOMO, distraction and frenzied blitz
- Threat of acedia- apathy...willingness to disengage...pass the time by passing the time.
 - **Purposelessness disguised as constant commotion.**

⁵ https://www.comparitech.com/tv-streaming/screen-time-statistics/#The_average_American_spends_just_over_7_hours_looking_at_a_screen_each_day

⁶ <https://www.crossrivertherapy.com/research/screen-time-statistics>

- Threat that we are never alone- desire to never be alone.
 - We want to be complex so we do not have to see ourselves before God and deal with our own thoughts.
- The constant "taps" on the shoulder...notifications from email/text/SM/voicemails.
- All we know is not being alone...and we have grown accustomed to it rather than be "alone with God".
 - Digital business is the enemy of depth, we are bound to be stuck in the shallows so long as we are never alone.
 - Pascal, "The soul cause of man's unhappiness is that he does not know how to stay quietly in his room."

III. A Practical Approach for Handling Tech

- Counseling folks in the community and church has taught me- a non tech guy- more than I expected.
- Porn is the consistent problem...talk with your young folks and in your marriage about it.
 - Please let us stop acting like this is not an epidemic or act as if it is not unholy.
 - Average age- Research also shows that children who are inappropriately exposed to porn are exposed at a very young age — between ages 9-13 on average. By teen years, most youth have been exposed to internet porn in some form, with 93% of teen boys and 62% of teen girls reporting internet porn exposure in one study.⁷
 - Typical source- websites, but the younger generation use apps, or exposure by other peers.
- Help your kids remember that the internet is forever.
- Help your pre-teens and teens understand how laws apply:
 - Section 2907.31
 - What Is Sexting? "Sexting" is the sending of nude or sexually suggestive images (usually photos) electronically, whether through text messaging, social media, chat boards, or email. Sexting has become especially common among teenagers—many of whom are minors—and can easily be used to cyberbully or harass.
 - For the most part, yes. In Ohio, sexting images *of* minors and sexting images *to* minors can be prosecuted under the state's existing laws relating to child pornography, child endangerment, and dissemination of harmful material to minors. Which kind of law applies depends on the conduct in question. Both adults and minors can face sexting charges.⁸
 - When sexting involves minors, it violates both state and federal child sexual abuse material (CSAM) laws.⁹
 - It can also fall under cyberbullying if shared, used in a revenge porn situation, or creates circumstances where someone harms themselves due to the distribution.
 - Prosecutors are showing less leniency towards teens, particularly young men.
- Healthy Practices:
 - No unknown passwords- ILLS: Those SM vids where a GF or wife goes to get a man's phone and panic ensues.
 - Limited screen times with shut offs
 - Wifi shuts off at a certain time each night
 - Helpful software (everything has a gap though):

⁷ <https://www.addictionhelp.com/porn/statistics/#:~:text=Research%20also%20shows%20that%20children,porn%20exposure%20in%20one%20study.>

⁸ <https://www.criminaldefenselawyer.com/resources/teen-sexting-ohio.htm>

⁹ [https://www.bark.us/blog/state-by-state-differences-in-sexting-laws/?srsltid=AfmBOor4AWvAy-q\\$rnexF8G9AnfQ9mXDGx8AGURtkYymRozfyFbumMpW](https://www.bark.us/blog/state-by-state-differences-in-sexting-laws/?srsltid=AfmBOor4AWvAy-q$rnexF8G9AnfQ9mXDGx8AGURtkYymRozfyFbumMpW)

- Covenant Eyes-
 - Bark-
 - Circle360
 - Google Family Link-
 - NetNanny-
 - Canopy-
- Of course- no software or habit can create the freedom that accepting the already won victory of Jesus can.
 - Temptation cycles, verses, accountability.
- Apps to be cautious with or avoid:
 - Snapchat- why?
 - Tiktok- why?
 - Streams- Youtube/Twitch/etc.
 - Reels on FB
 - Google Guest mode- no trace for the average person
- Friends phones stay on the counter/kitchen/main area when they are over.
 - Friends are a significant source of influence for godliness or ungodliness- neutrality is a myth.

IV. Addressing a common culprit- our own habits

- When one or both parents in the home struggle with some sort of pornography usage, likely there is an implicit resistance to policing the young folks in their home.
 - Guilt, hypocrisy, shame, defeatism engulf a parent and so they will not expect that which they are not doing themselves.
- When one or both parents choose to check out through social media usage, it makes it hard to police that which we poorly illustrate each day.
 - STRY: One of my kids coming up and talking to me while I am texting someone...I am in the middle of a thought but not handling their talk to me well...which matters more?
- Healthy Habits¹⁰
 - Set clear boundaries: Establish certain times throughout the day when screens are off-limits, such as during meals or before bedtime.
 - Prioritize offline activities: Make a strong effort to engage in activities that don't involve screens, such as reading a book, physical activity, or finding a new hobby.
 - Utilize screen time management tools: Take full advantage of built-in features contained in smartphones and apps to track screen time use and set daily limit reminders.
 - Create screen-free zones: Around your house, designate certain areas that are off-limits for digital use. Instead practice mindfulness, to encourage relaxation, conversation, or quality time with loved ones.
 - Be consistent: The hardest part is to be consistent. Making less screen time part of your routine will help to create healthier habits.
 - Set time limits on apps: It will require an unlock code from spouse, friend, or child.

¹⁰ <https://www.comparitech.com/tv-streaming/screen-time-statistics/>

V. “Bumper Lanes”¹¹

- Below are not a list of biblical commands or “one size fits all” solutions; they are simply some questions to consider in aiding your own life or in discipling your children about tech usage.
 - Is the time I plan to spend or passively find myself spending on tech competing with a spiritual priority?
 - Should I be using this time with people God has stewarded into my life?
 - Though not wrong to enjoy entertainment (scrolling/streaming/etc.), could I be using this time to grow through a book, language course, or some other medium to make me a better steward of the Gospel?
 - Does my spouse, friends, or children regularly have to wait or feel like they are interrupting me due to my phone or media usage?
 - By comparison, which content am I prone to seek in the morning- my Bible reading or phone/TV/social media?
 - Have I fallen into some bad habits (nightly TV, scrolling before bed, long toilet times, etc.) that are eating up more of the day than I would schedule if I had to?
- Practical helps
 - Reduce the amount of news you watch or read to 30 minutes or less
 - Watch more than the one new source beyond the one you agree with
 - When you find yourself upset at what you hear, pray for the person reporting it that God’s desire would be accomplished in their life
 - Turn off notifications & badges for anything non-emergency related or essential
 - Evaluate what parts of the day you need to turn your phone to “Do Not Disturb/Focus” mode
 - Take 5 minutes to reduce (or remove) unused, rarely used, or harmful apps
 - Unfollow or eliminate “clickbait” websites/people/companies in your social media or website viewing habits
 - Discuss what parts of your day will become “tech free” with other family members
 - Consider a day a week that can become your “digital/media detox” day

Conclusion: As we conclude, let’s sum it up with four guiding ideas.

Idea 1- cultivate a healthy suspicion for tech and progress- life before it and can be life without it. It all has an agenda and is linked to profits for others...be cautious.

Idea 2- be more thoughtful about understanding your connectedness with others.

Idea 3- deliberately use old technology- relearn old ways of life and enjoyment.

Idea 4- Find/remains settled in Christ and accept our human limitations.

¹¹ Deyoung, Kevin, Crazy Busy- chapter 7.