

**“Digital Detox”
Proverbs 9**

As we continue our real-life series where we are looking at everyday issues of life like parenting, decision-making, and finances from a biblical perspective, this morning we are going to cover the topic of digital technology

“We are living in the aftershock of the digital explosion” and the age of the smartphone. I know I don’t need to convince you of that this morning, but here are a few quick thoughts:

- Four out of the world’s five most valuable brands are tech companies: Apple, Google, Microsoft and FACEBOOK.
- In 1946 only 0.5% of American homes had ONE screen in their homes, a television. Today, American homes average 6 screens per household.
- Let me ask you this, how much time does the average American spend using electronic media? At the end of 2014, the Nielsen Corporation discovered, we spend 11 out of our roughly 16-18 waking hours using electronic media. That’s insane.
- One study said Americans are spending 4.7 hours a day on their smartphones, nearly 1/3 of their day (Informate Mobile Intelligence).
- Perhaps this is why Kevin Vanhoozer, a theologian in Chicago, said the [old] “philosophic motto: *“I think, therefore I am,”* has been replaced with the digital motto: *“I connect, therefore I am.”*

The use and (I believe we can say) growing addiction we have to the use of technology should press us to ask the question: How can we live in our digital world with God’s wisdom?

In every detail, in every waking moment of our lives, we have the opportunity to live with God’s wisdom. Wisdom is knowledge applied to the glory of God.

Now, it’s important to understand that we will not find verses in the Bible that say: only spend 34 minutes on social media per week. But we can apply wisdom principles. Over the past few weeks, I have jumped back into the Book of Proverbs. Proverbs is a book of wisdom that calls us to live with wisdom.

Read Proverbs 9 with me as we consider what it can look like to...

The Point: Apply God’s wisdom to your use of digital media.

Read Proverbs 9...

Two women... Calling from the high places of the city (where the temple is located). In other words the path we follow, either wisdom or folly, reveals whether or not we are living for God. Notice that both women, say the same thing: “Whoever is simple, let him turn in here!” But only one path leads to life. The other leads to destruction.

Please don’t think it too strong to put that framework on our use of technology. To boil it down: the way we text, watch Netflix, scroll on social media, surf the web... all of these hours and hours we spend will either give us life or they will starve our souls.

I’m going to give you five questions to regularly ask yourself when it comes to your use of digital technology, that I believe, when answered properly, can help us pursue God’s wisdom.

I. Do I view technology good, evil or neutral?

- We should neither blindly embrace nor fearfully reject...
 - Cultural engagement...
 - Strict separation or Blind acceptance.
- Taken by itself, I would argue technology is morally neutral.
 - “Technology is the creative activity of using tools to shape God’s creation for practical purposes.”
 - As those made in the image of our Creator God, we desire to take the raw materials of his creation and create tools for the common good.
 - Many of you work in job that create technology... This is what Genesis 1 calls out of us.
 - Technology can be a good gift from God. It is not inherently evil, but it is also not inherently good. Why?
 - Genesis 3 happens
- Technology, like everything else in God’s created world, is subject to the brokenness in our world due to sin.
 - We can use it to buy something online, or we can become shopaholics.
 - We can check something for work or we can burn hours while on the clock.
- So technology is neither good nor evil, but it is used for good or evil purposes,
- T: The question is: how will we use the gift?

At the same time, technology is in no way neutral.

- “It bears (a) the intentions of its creator, (b) the possibilities and limits of its design, and (c) the foreseen and unforeseen results of its implementation.”
- For example, we should be warned that we live in a culture in danger of *Amusing Ourselves to Death*, as Neil Postman argued IN 1985, in his book by that title.
 - One example he gives is how news anchors move from the tragic to the trivial without flinching.
 - This is why it was so refreshing to see Kate Bouldan break down in tears, when reporting on a little for year-old boy in Aleppo named Omran whose home was utterly devastated by a bomb. As the footage rolled of the tiny child being pulled out of the rubble, covered in dust and blood and complete shock, all Bouldan could basically get out was: “This is Omran. He’s alive, and we wanted you to know.”
 - Thank you Kate! May your tribe increase.
- We should not be passive recipients of technology.

T: Technology is not inherently good, or evil or neutral! That is why we need God’s wisdom to handle it rightly! #2

II. Is technology a constructive or destructive force in my life?

Technology can be a great thing. It can be Constructive...

- I love PEOPLE! I love that I can get in touch with people... Look at my text messages here... Social media helps me stay connected and even build some new friendships (to a degree!)
- I love Reading... KINDLE, BLANKEST, NEWS Feeds, the Bible (that’s right people) whenever I want to read it.
- I love Work!
 - THINGS: getting things done.
 - CAL:

- SLACK:
- EVERNOTE:
- GMAIL: (don't always love it... but, holla at me)
- Planning for Sundays (Planning Center App)
- I love setting goals... STRIDES
- I love sports... ESPN
- I love going places (Maps App), particularly good places to Eat - thank you YELP!
- I love music... I love taking pictures... I love my phone. Can't lie about it. It is what it is.

But here's the reality: I can use all of these things for good. I can serve people, encourage people, and grow in my relationship with God. BUT I can also allow these 4.5oz to serve as a destructive force in my life and so can you.

We must consider "what technology can do to us rather than just what it can do for us." (Challies)

- In ways we probably don't even realize, digital technology...
 - ... can under cut my ability to think deeply... and communicate deeply with others.
 - It can lead me to crave affirmation and base my identity on how many people liked or loved or retweeted or shared a post.
 - Related to that, how we use social media can reveal our tendency to portray a false image. We all love to post our highlight reel: the events and edited pictures that make life look better than reality. Don't lie. How many times have we posted the 10th selfie because the first 9 didn't work with the filter that would make us look better (my wife don't need no filter - they should make a filter named after her! What! :))
 - But you know... who knows the real you? Probably not your 2,000 "Friends" on Facebook. Nah, mean?
 - It can also lead us into temptation. How many lives and even marriages have been wrecked by porn addiction and Facebook romances. Temptation lurks everywhere, and if Satan pick you off while you scroll on your smartphone, he'll be more than happy to do so.
 - If that is a current struggle for you, we are here, not to judge you, but to help. Reach out to one of our pastors this week.
 - Like any idol, good things (like an iPhone, TV, Netflix, your laptop), any good thing becomes a bad thing when it becomes an ultimate thing.
- I used to hear pastors say: "If you want to know where someone's heart is before God, look at their checkbook." That is wise counsel. I can probably see what you value by seeing how you spend your money.
- Perhaps today, we should also say: "If you want to know where someone's heart is before God, look at how they use digital technology.

T: Which brings us to our 3rd and toughest question

III. Does technology serve me or own me?

How much time do you spend in front of screen?

- Addiction
 - Common Sense Media - Interview 1,240 parents and their children (ages 12-18)
 - 69% of parents and 78% (nearly 80%) of teens check their devices at least hourly.
 - 54% of children feel their parents check their phone too often.
 - 50% of teens feel they are addicted to their mobile devices.

- These devices and the apps on them are designed to steal our time.
 - “Constantly demand our attention”
 - Notifications!
 - Buzz, beep, blink, vibrate, light up...
 - The devil loves to work by distraction
- How do you know if your addicted? A few more questions:
 - **Do you feel anxious when away from the device or computer?**
 - That moment you realize you don’t have your phone, which strikes a feeling of nakedness in you. “What am I going to do without my phone? I feel exposed, insecure, vulnerable.
 - **Ringxiety:** This isn’t the moment where someone’s phone vibrates and everyone reaches for their phone. You think you hear your phone ringing or even feel it vibrating in your pocket, but it isn’t.
 - **Do you miss what is happening in real-time, right in front of you because of what is happening in the virtual world?**
 - Scrolling through the insignificant... (not everything is insignificant - I’m a fan of Facebook, but I’m a follower of Jesus)
 - **Do you feel the need to respond immediately to your smartphone?**
 - “We do not NEED to communicate all the time.” (Challies)
 - We do not need to take a picture every semi-cool moment of our lives for the world to see for .3 seconds of their lives.
 - **Do you stay online longer than originally intended?**
 - If you tell yourself you’ll only spend an hour online before playing with the kids and end up online until after they’ve gone to bed, you’re in trouble.
 - We need to realize that really smart people know how to design products that feed and even create addiction. Gaming companies create what are known as “compulsion loops.” And really smart people at Stanford created a whole new field of study in 1998 called “CAPTology” which stands for “Computers as Persuasive Technology.”
 - **Does one of your first moves and last moves of the day involves your smartphone...**
 - 73% of the 8,000 regular readers polled at desiringGod.org said they are more likely to check email and social media *before* your spiritual disciplines on a typical morning.
 - [[Why? Novelty Candy (new info, first to know), Ego Candy, Entertainment Candy AND Boredom Avoidance, Responsibility Avoidance, and Hardship Avoidance.]]
 - “I feel like I have to get saved every morning. I wake up and the devil is sitting on my face.” - Piper
 - “The first and greatest business of my day is to get my soul happy in God.” - George Mueller
 - **Do you spend more time with a computer than people?**
- What have I just described? Worship.
 - *Anxious when I’m away from God.*
 - Can’t miss him... My eyes are fixed.
 - Reflexively respond to him.
 - *Give him more than I intend.*
 - *First and last move of my day - HIM!*
- That’s how I want my relationship with God to be described. Hat in college: “I’m an addict.” Addicted to God. (I want you!) first and last. More. More. More.

Are we more addicted to our phones than we are to God? But everyone does it. It's more than socially acceptable. It's socially expected. You're weird if you're not among the 70-80%, spending 11 hours a day with electronic media.

T: Not only does it affect our relationship with God, it also effects our relationship with those around us.

IV. Does it develop or *distract* me from my most important relationships?

Could it be that the rise of "social media" and the rich advances of information technology have simultaneously led us to be more and less connected than we've ever been?

Could it be that the very reasons we love this gadget should be the very reasons we should hate it?

- When we communicate online, it is almost always brief and superficial. The problem is when those communications become virtually (no-pun intended) virtually habitual.
- I saw an article recently where children are increasingly weak in social skills because they spend so much time in front of a screen and so little time in front of another person's face.
- Let's not say, "Poor kids." We too, settle for "thin" communication. One or two dimensional and miss the richness of all of the nuances of personal, real-time, real-life, incarnational communication.
- How many times have you been offended by someone only to discover you misinterpreted their message, because you can't communicate TONE very effectively via text messaging.
- How many times have we been guilty of giving less than our full and undivided attention to someone we love because of the allure of our smartphone.
 - You've seen the family out at dinner where every person at the table is wrapped up in their own technological pleasure.
 - OR, you've seen that jerk out on a date who can't stop watching the Red Sox rather than investing in conversation. (I mean, that's okay, as long as we're in first place!)Social...
- The distracted life keeps us from a deep life.
 - I can't tell you the most awesome post or tweet I saw this week.
 - I can tell you the top 3 most important conversations...

Let's get below the surface. And let's make our communication as personal and incarnational (in the flesh) as possible!

- Is it bold to assert that (generally speaking) a call is better than a text or email.
- OR that, generally speaking, FaceTime is better than a call. Somebody FaceTime a brother this week, ok?
- BUT what is better than FaceTime? Face to Face.

Wedding today... the bride and groom on two different sides of the door... **!picture!...**

- That's not sweet... "that's agonizing..."
- I would broken down the door! WHY? FACE to FACE...
- When you really love someone and value someone, you want the interaction to be as personal as it possibly can be!

2 John 1:12 "Though I have much to write to you, I would rather not use paper and ink. Instead I hope to come to you and talk face to face, so that our joy may be complete." (1st century, not 21st century!)

GOSPEL: Jesus showed up and took on flesh... and he died so that we might once again meet God face to face and dwell IN HIS PRESENCE forever. You will never find a God who values relationship like this.

T: Finally...

V. Do I need a digital detox?

What is a detox? Detox is the process when our body is cleansed from toxic dependencies that corrupt our health. Detox brings our body back “to normal, where we ought to be.”

How do you detox?

- **Set hard boundaries:**
 - When I get home, I TRY to put my phone on the counter, so I’m not distracted by it and can focus on my girls.
 - Some have a rule (only answer email while in the office; when in conversation, put the phone out of reach. Does that sound radical? Maybe you’re an addict.)
 - [Trip Lee: When I read the Word and when I pray I have to either leave my phone in another room or put it on do not disturb]
 - Then communicate it... Goals app? (Strides)
- **Welcome accountability**
 - Some of us need to apologize to the people we love the most.
 - And we have kind of opened up in our life the perfect freedom to at any time rebuke each other when the phone is grabbed too much with no hesitancy. - Trip Lee
- **Call a fast.**
 - You could go cold-turkey???
 - **RHC CHALLENGE: 2 hour block everyday this week, in your non-work hours: No SCREEN.**
 - What will I do?
 - Go insane? Free Counseling... RHC :)
 - Retreat: For the health of our soul, we must learn to get alone undistracted.
 - AND feast on that which truly matters.
 - Constructive uses of time
 - Recreate - Exercise (no iPod) - Do a project that requires *offline* physical or mental labor.
 - Relate
 - Read
 - Pascal said it this way: “We forsake pleasures only for others which are greater.”
 - Chalmers: “The only way to dispossess the heart of an old affection is by the expulsive power of a new one.”

Conclusion:

This morning, I want to pray that we will allow God to show us our need, to whatever degree, for a digital detox SO THAT we might delight ourselves, more wholeheartedly IN HIM.

I’m going to pray and then we are going to sing a great prayer together: “Let it be Jesus... the first name that I call... There is no other. For me, my entire life.... Everything that I am... is to live is Christ.” Life is about him. Let it be Jesus.