

Children, Technology, and Social Media: Ten Questions About Tech

INTRODUCTION

1. **Technology has become utterly ubiquitous – like the air we breathe. It affects how we live, think, and relate whether we realize it or not. But because it's literally part of how we live, we may not give it a lot of serious thought.**

“As anyone who knows a teen or tween can attest, media are among the most powerful forces in young people’s lives today. Eight-to-eighteen-year-olds spend more time with media than in any other activity besides (maybe) sleeping – and average of more than 7-1/2 hours a day, 7 days a week” (Albert Mohler).

2. **Whether good, bad, or neutral, today’s technology presents some unique dangers. So how do we deal with it?**

“Now people have in their hand what is essentially a deadly weapon – the most forceful tool for life-destroying temptation that’s ever been put into the human hand. You’ve never been able to bring temptation at that level – visually, audibly, with that availability – in history. You can pollute yourself faster and more extensively than ever” (John MacArthur).

“A family that does not or cannot control the information environment of its children is barely a family at all, and may lay claim to the name only by virtue of the fact that its members share biological information through DNA . . . That the family can no longer do this is, I believe, obvious to everyone” (Neil Postman, *Technopoly*, ch. 5).

3. **The Bible is sufficient, and has much to say to help us think rightly about technology.**

“They promise them freedom, but they themselves are slaves of corruption, since people are enslaved to whatever defeats them” (2 Pet. 2:19).

TEN QUESTIONS TO TEST THE USE OF TECHNOLOGY IN YOUR HOME

1. “Is it helping us to be present?”

“These words that I am giving you today are to be in your heart. 7 Repeat them to your children. Talk about them when you sit in your house and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. 8 Bind them as a sign on your hand and let them be a symbol on your forehead. 9 Write them on the doorposts of your house and on your city gates” (Deut. 6:6–9).

2. “Is it helping us to be alert?” (Mark 13:33; Eph. 6:18; 1 Thess. 5:6; 1 Pet. 5:8)

“Besides this, since you know the time, it is already the hour for you to wake up from sleep, because now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed” (Rom. 13:11).

3. “Is it helping us to be transformed?”

“Do not be conformed to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may discern what is the good, pleasing, and perfect will of God” (Rom. 12:2).

4. “Is it helping us to grow in wisdom?” (Prov. 4:5–7, Ps. 90:12)

5. “Is it helping us to be patient?” (Ps. 27:14)

Parenthood

Lesson 16

6. “Is it helping us to be content?” (Phil. 4:11)

“At first I’d figured that the problem was a symptom of middle-age mind rot. But my brain, I realized, wasn’t just drifting. It was hungry. It was demanding to be fed the way the Net fed it – and the more it was fed, the hungrier it became. Even when I was away from my computer, I yearned to check e-mail, click links, do some Googling. I wanted to be connected” (Nicholas Carr, *What the Internet is Doing to Our Brains*, 16.)

7. “Is it helping us to be real?”

8. “Is it helping us to pray?” (Luke 5:16)

“The end of all things is near; therefore, be alert and sober-minded for prayer” (1 Pet. 4:7).

9. “Is it helping us to be humble?”

“God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble” (Jas. 4:6).

10. “Is it helping us be stewards?”

“Pay careful attention, then, to how you walk—not as unwise people but as wise— 16 making the most of the time, because the days are evil. 17 So don’t be foolish, but understand what the Lord’s will is” (Eph. 5:15–17).

Parenthood

Lesson 16

BONUS Question: Is it helping me to be holy?

“Pure and undefiled religion before God the Father is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself unstained from the world” (Jas. 1:27).

“Pursue peace with everyone, and holiness—without it no one will see the Lord” (Heb. 12:14).

“But as the one who called you is holy, you also are to be holy in all your conduct; 16 for it is written, **Be holy, because I am holy**” (1 Pet. 1:15–16).

“Finally brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable—if there is any moral excellence and if there is anything praiseworthy—dwell on these things” (Phil 4:8).

EXAMPLES FOR “DIGITAL BOUNDARIES”

- Do not check my smartphone until after my morning devotions.
- Turn notifications off.
- Try to end my digital day by 9:00 p.m.
- Don't check my smartphone when having lunch or dinner with a friend, or leave phone in car.
- Take a digital fast every Sunday (or start with every Sunday afternoon)
- No digital gadgets at mealtimes.
- Limit checking emails or texts to once an hour.
- Try not to talk on the phone to virtual people when real people are in front of me.
- If children are at someone else's home, no music, media, or movies they have not seen at home.
- Pray daily for God to help me become a good steward of my virtual life.

PREPARATION FOR NEXT LESSON:

- Read “10 Parenting Imperatives from the Book of Proverbs” by Paul Carter at ca.thegospelcoalition.org/columns/ad-fontes/10-parenting-imperatives-book-proverbs/