

# LOOK UP

28 Day Guide To  
Digital Rest

Liberty University







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## 28 Day Guide To Digital Rest

Contributors: Daniel Hostetter, Judd Harris,  
Chloe Hobbs, and Isaac Kantola

# Introduction

One night in 2024 during Campus Community, the speaker, Kevin Huguley, preached on the subject of idolatry. During the message, he invited students to interact with his message in a fun, Family Feud-style approach by texting in the most common idols in their lives. The overwhelming answer that came back was “my phone.”

It was a revealing moment for me. What was surprising was not learning that phones were having a damaging impact on people. After all, there has been a litany of new research over the last few years that confirms that. What was surprising to me was the self-awareness of the students in the room that night. They knew their smartphone was a problem, but what they did not know was what to do about it. That night, I heard their feedback as a kind of collective shout for help.

In response, I decided to experiment with the notion of doing a campus-wide digital fast the following spring, drawing on the work of Darren Whitehead and other influential pastors, authors, and teachers. Darren spoke at a Convocation that spring and kicked off for us a twenty-eight-day digital fast during the month of February. At the conclusion of the month, the feedback from students who had participated was overwhelmingly positive.

It sealed in my own mind the decision to do it again in the coming years and make it part of the regular experience for every Liberty student. But instead of relying on an outside resource, I felt it would be best to create our own devotional resource, one made specifically for a Liberty student. And I determined to simply call it a digital rest.

The expectation of the rest remains the same, however. The goal is not for every student to give up their smartphone for a month. That is not a realistic or even helpful option. There is simply too much of contemporary life that requires use of a smartphone, and much of it is

good and right. No, the goal is simply to strip the phone of the kind of features that are aimed to draw the user into an endless and bottomless spiral of distraction. Put simply, the goal is to make the smartphone dumb for a month. No social media. No games. No distracting apps. The clock app is OK to keep, in other words. TikTok is not.

One aim of the digital rest is to help create a plan for using the phone wisely in the future, after the digital rest has concluded. It's certainly helpful to create these rules and disciplines. But the ultimate aim, of course, is far greater than that. The ultimate aim is to take seriously the call of Christ to know God and to pursue Him as the highest desire of the human heart. To the extent that a smartphone detracts from that pursuit, it is indeed an idol. But it can be toppled.

I highly encourage you to commit to the following twenty-eight days with that end in mind.

- Josh Rutledge

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## **Preparing for the Digital Rest**

Make your phone dumb for the next month.

1. Log out of all social media (Instagram, TikTok, X, Facebook, Snapchat). Make sure to log out on your laptop or desktop computer, as well.
2. Identify every app on your phone that is not absolutely essential.
3. Delete every identified, non-essential app. Or, simply block access to those non-essential apps using a time management app like Opal or using a device key like Bloom or Brick. (Note - there's lot of options out there now to make a smartphone dumb. Do not simply commit to "try hard" to stay away from apps that cause

distractions. Whether through deleting them or blocking access through an app or device, you must eliminate the option of being able to quickly access them.)

4. Consider downloading a time-tracking app like Aro that tracks time spent “away” from your phone. The goal is to start creating physical distance for long stretches of time away from your phone.
5. Turn your phone to grayscale.

Each weekday, read one page of this devotional, then take a moment to respond in prayer and reflection.



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Week I

# WAY OF THE WORLD

“People will come to love their oppression,  
to adore the technologies that undo their  
capacities to think.”

- Neil Postman

# Attention

***I will meditate on your precepts and fix my eyes on your ways.***

Psalm 119:15

“I used to find it easy to immerse myself in a book or lengthy article,” wrote journalist Nicholas Carr. “Now...my concentration starts to drift after a page or two. I get fidgety, lose the thread, begin looking for something else to do.” Writing in 2010, just three years after the release of the iPhone, Carr admits the internet is “chipping away my capacity for concentration and contemplation. Whether I’m online or not, my mind now expects to take in information the way the Net distributes it: in a swiftly moving stream of particles. Once I was a scuba diver in the sea of words. Now I zip along the surface like a guy on a Jet Ski.”

Our phones are fighting a war for our attention. Most days, we don’t even see that we’re losing the battle. The attention-seeking machines in our pockets only need a tiny foothold—just one notification—to derail valuable times of prayer, homework, and good conversation. One quick phone check can turn into hours of doomscrolling, especially when our generation is blasted with an average of *one notification per minute*. Our campus is no exception: in a 2024 survey, Liberty students admitted spending nearly five hours per day on their phones.

These hours are not harmless or neutral. Quite literally, our phones are rewiring our brains. In his book *The Anxious Generation*, psychologist Jonathan Haidt shows that constant digital interruptions damage “self-control, focus, and the ability to resist off-ramps.” Once, we could meditate on God, think deeply, exercise without music, and drive without a podcast. Now, our phones lead us to tumble from one distraction to the next, unable to fully focus on Scripture, prayer, homework, or the people right in front of us.

When our phones steal our attention, we often fall into paradoxes:

- *We stay informed but don't really understand.* Notifications, headlines, and reels offer unlimited information but keep us from devoting the time we need to really learn. We might think we're swimming in an ocean of knowledge, but we're really just stuck in the shallows.
- *We stay busy but don't really produce.* We clear out our texts, glance at Canvas, flick through reels, read a discussion board prompt, look at the next volley of texts... and suddenly the day is over. We race from one thing to the next yet feel like we don't accomplish very much.
- *We stay entertained but don't really rest.* The easiest way to end a day is crash on the couch, watch a show, then drift into fitful sleep. We all end up here from time to time, but these passive moments can quickly develop into unwise habits. Following this path of least resistance does not lead to true rest. It takes time and effort to pick up hobbies like exercising, reading, writing, or sketching, but active rest is more enjoyable and rewarding than constant scrolling.

This is why we need to examine our time and the things on which we set our attention. Our phones expand to fill any time and space we give them. If we instead fill our free time with high-quality forms of work and leisure, our phones will begin to lose their grip on our attention.

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**Pray:** Unite my heart to serve you, O God. You have given me the precious gift of attention—may I only set it on good, eternal things. For where my treasure is, there my heart will be also.

**Reflect:** Do you resonate with the story at the beginning of this page? If so, reflect on the specific ways that technology has made you more distractible (constant notifications, ever-accessible entertainment, etc.).

# Discernment

***The simple believes everything, but the prudent gives thought to his steps.***

Proverbs 14:15

Before cell phones, information was a rare commodity. We could only get instant knowledge with a sharp memory or set of encyclopedias. If we didn't know something about the world, say, the capital of Nevada, we had to track down a map, quiz a friend, or head to the library.

But today, our phones are portals to instant knowledge on every topic from state capitals to crochet patterns. Our phones offer nearly unlimited information and save time in work, school, and hobbies. What could possibly go wrong?

Author Nicholas Carr points out one big problem: our phones are not a “library of books” but instead a “library of snippets.” We’re constantly barraged with snippets—ads, sports scores, recipes, tragic news stories, feel-good reels, and information that never seems to end. We can “fact-check” arguments quicker than ever before, but as soon as we find answers, our phones dismiss yesterday’s controversies and sweep us into new ones. Information overload is our new reality. We’re left too overwhelmed to sort truth from error, good from evil, and the important from the trivial.

The digital age has shown that instant, unlimited *information* does not always produce instant, unlimited *wisdom*. Living online makes us better at making quick decisions and juggling multiple tasks. But our newfound ability to know everything and be everywhere all at once also makes us more distracted and less productive, more scattered and less focused. Neurologist Jordan Grafman has shown that “the more you multitask, the less deliberative you become; the less able to think

and reason out a problem.” What good is unlimited information if we don’t have the focus or attention span to really understand it? We have more information at our fingertips than any other generation—but have we really grown in wisdom? Think about your own social media or news feed. We know a whole lot about politics, sports, and celebrities, but we also increasingly *forget* yesterday’s news and *worry* about tomorrow’s problems.

More knowledge often seems like the ticket to freedom and joy. Yet so often, mere knowledge without wisdom can keep us from the things of God, whether our devotional time or deep Christian community. Paul warned us about this temptation in Colossians 2:8: “See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to Christ.”

Jesus calls us beyond mere knowledge into a life of wisdom that can only be found in Him, “who became to us wisdom from God” (1 Corinthians 1:30).

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**Pray:** Lord, you are the Truth, the standard by which I know right from wrong. As I use my phone today, interrupt my anxious scrolling with the truth of your Word. May it point me to things that are good, true, and beautiful.

**Reflect:** What are the benefits and dangers of unlimited access to information? How has this helped and/or hurt you?

# Action

***For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.***

Ephesians 2:10

There is a helpful concept in the field of communications called the *information-action ratio*. In short, when we learn information, are we able to act on it? God intended information to lead to action. When we come to know something new about God's creation, our instinct is to *respond*—using what we know to shape culture or build something new. Inaction and passivity run against the grain of creation.

But in 1985, one professor noticed a growing gap between information and action. Neil Postman blamed the television, whose never-ending programs and rapid-fire advertisements created a strange new “world of fragments, where events stand alone, stripped of any connection.” Gone were the days when homes (particularly living spaces and bedrooms) were places of order and coherence that carved out space for conversation, reflection, and rest. Now, just one tiny television could fill every home with a noisy, never-ending stream of entertainment.

Our world has only become more fractured and disoriented in the forty years since Postman's warning. The average Instagram user watches *ten reels a minute*—so in just sixty seconds, we may catch brief glimpses of distant wars, celebrity vacations, and political rallies. These slivers of others' lives are not necessarily unserious or trivial, but often, they are totally irrelevant to our daily lives and responsibilities. We may feel more “informed” or “entertained” after scrolling, but practically, how do we respond to the content we consume on our phones? In many cases, *we don't*. We often choose passivity and keep scrolling—knowing more but doing less.

But we are the people of God. We can and should live differently, since Christ has freed us from our former sins—including apathy and overconsumption! Jesus’ work on the cross has freed us to actively and joyfully obey him by loving one another. As Paul taught the Galatian church, “do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.” In a culture that values inert entertainment and constant consumption, we can stand out as people of *action* “created in Christ Jesus for good works” (Ephesians 2:10; Titus 3:14).

On a practical level, we often feel a need to “stay informed” on world news or entertainment. This isn’t necessarily a wrong desire, but we should always ask: *Why* do I want to scroll online? Do I want mere knowledge, or do I want to stay informed so that I can better love my sibling, roommate, or friend?

What good work has God planned for me today? How can I serve and bless others? By asking these questions, we begin to “train for godliness” and turn information into action.

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**Pray:** I repent of the times that I have used my phone to escape from reality. Lord, keep me from distraction and prepare my mind for action, that I may love my neighbor more than the easy entertainment on my phone.

**Reflect:** Write down specific ways you have used your phone to distract from reality. Then, consider one practical way to “put to death” the sins of apathy and passivity in your own life.

# Others

***It is not good that the man should be alone.***

Genesis 2:18

Moral psychologist Jonathan Haidt recounts one memorable conversation with a college student. “Gen Z are an incredibly isolated group of people,” the student confessed. “We have shallow friendships and superfluous romantic relationships that are mediated and governed to a large degree by social media.”

Our generation has grown up in what journalist Derek Thompson calls the “anti-social century.” Gen Z spends more time alone than previous young adult cohorts. College students hang out with friends for *seven fewer hours each week* than students did two decades ago. Unsurprisingly, this trend came soon after the launch of the iPhone. Once an occasional luxury reserved for “computer time,” private screen time is steadily replacing real-world friendship.

But how bad is this development, really? Can’t digital relationships fill the same need that in-person relationships used to fill, just through a new medium?

Yes and no. At its best, digital technology is a useful, temporary replacement for in-person friendship. But overall, our phones are designed to push us away from others into isolation. Think about how your phone presents the illusion of risk-free community. Why ask a classmate to lunch when I could just scroll or game in the safety of my room? Why initiate a hard conversation face-to-face when I could send a cautious text instead? Why confess my sins to a friend or Community Group Leader when I can find affirmation on TikTok or Reddit? Even when we spend quality time with friends or mentors, our phones are an ever-present security blanket if it gets *awkward*—a serious fear for our generation.

Every friendship is risky. There's no way to avoid the possibility of disappointment, rejection, or pain. "Love anything and your heart will be wrung and possibly broken," wrote C.S. Lewis in *The Four Loves*. But avoiding suffering through digital distraction is *not* the answer. If you run away from Christian community, you also run away from the voice of God. Your heart will change in digital isolation. As Lewis warns, "It will become unbreakable, impenetrable, irredeemable. To love is to be vulnerable."

Our phones can keep us from loving others made in the image of God. But we can also be conditioned in the other direction. Show up, be vulnerable, and brave the risks of friendship. The pleasures of the digital world will soon become far less appealing than the joys of Christian community.

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**Prayer:** Lord, help me see others not as threats but as gifts through whom you are working for my good. Give me courage to turn from the safety of my phone and reach out to others with selfless love!

**Reflect:** In the past week, was there a moment you let your phone distract you from others? What opportunities might you have missed?

# Self

***...in the last days there will come times of difficulty. For people will be lovers of self...***

2 Timothy 3:1-2

Baby Boomers, Gen X, and Millennials all experienced similar levels of mental illness. Gen Z, though, is in the middle of a mental health crisis. Haidt's research found that the number of college students facing depression or anxiety has more than doubled since 2010. Emergency room visits for self-harm *doubled* among older teen girls, while suicide rates rapidly increased across the board. Haidt concludes that there has "never been a generation this depressed, anxious, and fragile."

College student mental health has been decreasing for decades but fell off a cliff in 2010—the same year smartphones and social media hit mainstream markets. Our phones didn't just pull us away from others; they began to invert our attention on the self. Our image became more important than our soul. We stopped asking, "Who am I becoming?" and started asking, "How do I look?" The self has become a god—and it's destroying us.

Social media platforms are built to reward this kind of self-promotion. In fact, they train us to think that our value lies in visibility. Research has shown that social media increases desires for material things but also our longings to be seen, admired, and envied.

This level of self-obsession is exhausting. It's a highway with no off-ramp, a treadmill with no emergency stop. Darren Whitehead puts it bluntly: our devices are designed "to reinforce the lie that we can be like God." We scroll, post, and refresh, trying to be omnipresent, omniscient, and adored—but instead of becoming divine, we become anxious, insecure, and spiritually numb.

This is the thief Jesus warned us about in John 10:10. The thief doesn't just steal our time; he steals our attention, identity, and capacity to love. He convinces us that life is found in the mirror. But Jesus gives us eternal life, which is not a life of constant self-obsession but one marked by humility, joy, and thoughtful care for the needs of others.

Our phones will always offer us a mirror. But Jesus offers a window—into truth, into community, into life. Choose the window.

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**Pray:** Lord, when I feel the desire to perform, remind me that you already know and love me. May your grace calm my anxieties and satisfy the deepest longings of my heart.

**Reflect:** How often do I check or think about my digital appearance, stats, or posts? What does this reveal about where I am placing my identity?



Week II

# WAY OF THE WORD

“The cost of a thing is the amount of...life  
which is required to be exchanged for it,  
immediately or in the long run.”

**- Henry David Thoreau**

# What to Do About the Phone?

***Choose this day whom you will serve.***

Joshua 24:15

Christians critique to construct. In other words, we don't want the world to burn, nor do we ignore its problems. Instead, we point out what is wrong with the world to affirm what is true.

Let's try this exercise with our phones. Throughout history, the world has approached technology from two opposite directions:

*determinism* and *instrumentalism*.

Determinists believe that technology shapes us. Thinkers like Karl Marx blamed society's evils on technological development. To them, technology (whether the means of production or the television) is the ultimate cause of our misery. Rotten men create rotten technologies, which reward them and exploit everyone else.

On the other hand, instrumentalists see that we can shape technology. We create neutral tools to be used for great good or evil; ultimately, their moral direction depends only on the morality of the user. One television pioneer claimed that "the products of modern science are not in themselves good or bad...It is the way they are used that determines their value." This opportunistic view is standard today.

Both options get something deeply wrong: technology cannot fully control us, nor is technology a neutral tool. Yet, by common grace, Christians can affirm that both options also get something right about reality. Determinists see that sin infects every part of creation, including our technologies. Unwise technology use (or using unwise technologies) will form us toward ungodliness, and people in power have used

technology to exploit and harm others made in the image of God. On the other hand, instrumentalists see that we can use technology well—if we wield our God-given creativity and power to serve others, advance culture, and promote holiness!

Christians can appreciate the truth in both views, reject what is false, and then place technology within the redemptive story of Scripture:

1. *Creation*: God created technology to be good, as a tool for us to fulfill the creation mandate.
2. *Fall*: Sin enters technology, and humanity either uses it for evil or flees it entirely.
3. *Redemption*: Christ frees us from slavery to sin that we may hate what is evil and cling to what is good.

Creation shows us that we can shape technology. The Fall shows us that technology shapes us. God’s redemption shows us that we must use technology wisely.

We’ll unpack this uniquely Christian understanding of technology this week. Then, for the last two weeks, we’ll get practical, as we begin to work out our salvation into every part of our technology use and spiritual discipline.

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**Pray:** Lord, open my eyes to see your world clearly, to understand reality as it actually is. Help me to see Jesus today—and by His light, to see everything else.

**Reflect:** Think about your own posture toward technology. Which direction do you lean? Do you tend to celebrate technological potential or fear its harms?

# Creation

## Tech Gives Us Power

**God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”**

Genesis 1:28

Technology gives us great power. Throughout history, men have developed and used technologies for great destruction (think nuclear weapons) or great good (think polio vaccine). Most of us carry powerful technologies in our pockets and wear them on our wrists. As Tony Reinke observes, we now wield “godlike technological powers over creation” to a degree never seen before.

This power is not accidental—in fact, it stands at the center of God’s creation. In the beginning, God created a world brimming with raw materials and latent potential, and He told Adam and Eve to “fill the earth and subdue it” by exercising dominion over all creation (Genesis 1:28). From the start, God gave us the power to unfold the potential He enfolded into creation.

Technology is one of the main ways we fulfill that mandate. Whether we harness energy, write code, design financial systems, or produce music, our creativity reflects the image of our creative Father who delights in innovation, structure, and beauty. We are obeying God by developing and using technologies that solve problems and serve others!

Used rightly, technology is not a necessary evil but a *creational good*. It can be the very means by which we follow Jesus and advance the gospel! The printing press helped launch the Reformation. Digital

translation tools accelerated global missions. Social media carries the gospel into unreached corners of our own neighborhoods. God has and will continue to use technology to advance His kingdom until the day He returns!

Each day is filled with opportunities to use technology in ways that reflect God's goodness. Study Scripture deeply with Logos or other Bible tools. Listen to podcasts or sermons that sharpen your mind and stir your affections for Christ. Build an online business that honors God and meets the needs of others. Use your calendar and notes apps to wisely steward your time and tasks. Even running a fantasy football league with your community group can be a way to build joyful, Christ-centered relationships. These are not trivial uses; they are faithful ones!

Technology is a good gift when it helps you worship God, love others, and bring order and beauty out of God's creation. Use it well.

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**Pray:** God of creation, thank you for giving me the ability and freedom to create. Today, help me use my gifts through technology to point others to your truth, goodness, and beauty.

**Reflect:** In my major and field of study, what are ways I can use technology for God's glory and others' good?

# Fall

## Tech Has Power Over Us

***Their idols are silver and gold, the work of human hands...those who make them become like them, so do all who trust in them.***

Psalm 115:4, 8

God created technology to be good in that it extends our capacity and helps us steward God's creation. But Christians must also affirm a contrasting (and more sobering) truth about technology. Tech not only empowers us to do things; *it does things to us*. The same tools that help us worship God are also mirrors that tempt us to worship ourselves. The same devices that carry the gospel can also carry pride, vanity, and addiction.

This is the reality of life after the Fall. Sin has infected every part of creation, including our technologies. This means our phones are not neutral devices that depend on the morality of the user. Rather, tech companies embed certain values and agendas into our phones.

Christian philosophers often argue that every technology is "value-laden." While the overall structure of technology is good, the moral direction of each platform and device is determined by the intentions of its creators. Social media algorithms, for instance, are engineered to capture and hold our attention, often through variable reward systems that promote divisive or emotionally charged content. These technologies do not merely serve our needs; they actively shape our habits, desires, and thought patterns.

This shaping can be costly. Our phones often overwhelm us with information, diminish our capacities for memory and attention, and distract us from prayer, reflection, and meaningful friendships. The psalmist warns that those who trust in “the work of human hands” soon “become like them”—dull, lifeless, and spiritually dead.

God created all things to be good, but the doctrine of the Fall shows us that sin subverts even the best things to instead serve the world, the flesh, and the devil. Our phones are not neutral technologies. They will always offer great possibility *and* great peril.

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**Pray:** Lord, I confess that I often let technology shape me more than your Word. Help me to resist the pull of distraction and instead be formed by your truth.

**Reflect:** Think of an app you use every day. What values are embedded in this app? List ways that these values form you toward or away from godliness.

# Redemption Don't Give In!

***Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it.***

Matthew 7:13-14

Christians can see technology rightly because we trust in Jesus, “the key that opens all the hidden treasures of God’s wisdom and knowledge” (Colossians 2:3, Good News Bible). When we look at our phones through the lens of Scripture, we see that the power of technology is good (because God created it) but also dangerous (because man is fallen).

Yet, we are still prone to sin in our technology use. One common temptation is *accommodation*—the instinct to quickly adopt new technologies, no questions asked.

Even before modern technology, Christians knew that Jesus’ death and resurrection turned everything on its head. They could no longer live like their pagan neighbors, let alone the rest of the world. Paul warned the church at Rome to “not be conformed to the pattern of this world” (Romans 12:2). By “this world” Paul does not mean the literal, physical earth but rather the deepest convictions of our culture, the spirit of the age. This world will always set itself against the things of God, and it will do everything it can to turn our hearts away from God. “Going with the flow” of the world is just not an option for the Christian!

This principle applies directly to our phone usage. The heart of man is “deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked” (Jeremiah 17:9), so we shouldn’t be surprised when fallen people use technology in ways that do not glorify God. Some of these ways are obvious: pornography,

addictive sports gambling, and overreliance on artificial intelligence models. These are clear examples of sinful use that should be rejected. But not all technology misuse is so obvious. Think about times you have used social media as a convenient distraction or retreated into online communities. Done repeatedly, this little action captures our attention—often to the point that we struggle to focus on God when praying or reading Scripture. This keeps us from growing in godliness!

What should we take away from this? It's certainly easier to take the wide road and adopt the ways of the world. In fact, the cards are stacked against us. But the narrow road is always worth taking, for it comes with great reward! If we take the path of godliness, we will begin to magnify Christ to others through our wise use of technology. Our distinctiveness from the world will become one of our best witnesses to the goodness, truth, and beauty of the Christian faith.

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**Pray:** Lord, guard my heart from the sin of thoughtlessness. Help me resist the pull of cultural conformity and instead walk the narrow road of wisdom.

**Reflect:** Again, think of an app you use every day. Do I ever feel pressure to use it just because “everyone else does”? If I didn't feel this pressure, would I still use this app?

# Redemption

## Don't Run Away!

***The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.***

John 10:10

Accommodation is one common temptation, but there is another equal and opposite error. Some people swing too far to one side of the pendulum by embracing every technology, but others react against this tendency and instead *withdraw*—rejecting the God-given opportunities of technology and fleeing the problem altogether.

Many believers see the dangers of poor phone use and so have an understandable aversion to technology. For many of us, our parents kept us off social media before a certain age or restricted our phone usage entirely. Others are rightly skeptical about the rise of artificial intelligence and wish to limit its influence on our critical thinking. These are often wise decisions, yet we should be willing to question our motives. Is my caution around technology motivated by fear? Or is it driven by the positive desire to obey God in every area of life, including the way I use my phone?

Generally, our generation doesn't think this way. We're digital natives, and it isn't natural for us to react in fear against technology. However, we can still fall into the trap of thinking about our phone use in these binary terms. We go from deleting Instagram to downloading it "just one more time," and we happily jump between social media fasts and social media binges. It's good to abstain from social media at times, but glorifying God involves more than simply rejecting any technology with the potential for harm. Just as our phones can hold us back, they can also be used as tools to help us on the road to godliness.

So what is the way forward? How do we avoid being fearful and reactionary? If we shouldn't accommodate or withdraw, what would it actually look like to use technology in a way that honors God and leads to our flourishing?

*Wisdom is the way.* The Bible insists on this. Though the Word doesn't offer specific instruction on smartphone use, it does provide principles of wisdom that we can (and are called to) apply in our daily lives. If God really gives us "everything we need for life and godliness" (2 Peter 1:3-4), then we can trust that He gives us everything we need to use technology well, for our good and His glory!

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**Pray:** Lord, grant me wisdom to navigate the digital world with discernment and grace. Help me to resist the errors of fearful withdrawal and careless indulgence.

**Reflect:** Are there times I have reacted against technology and withdrawn? In what ways might my rejection of certain technologies be limiting my ability to live out the abundant life Jesus offers?



Week III

# WAY OF WISDOM

“But what is liberty without wisdom, and without virtue? It is the greatest of all possible evils; for it is folly, vice, and madness, without tuition or restraint.”

**- Edmund Burke**

# Train for Godliness

***Train yourself for godliness...it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come.***

1 Timothy 4:7-8

College is not easy. Reading long texts and solving complex problems demands rigorous discipline over mind and schedule alike. In this season of intense intellectual formation, Paul's exhortation to Timothy invites us to consider a parallel kind of training that is not merely academic but spiritual. Godliness, Paul says, demands an even greater level of commitment than we give our studies, because godliness bears fruit now and forevermore.

One of the best ways to train for godliness is to exercise self-control over our phones and learn how to use them wisely. Our devices are constantly shaping us, so the real question is *how?* Under whose authority? For the Christian, that ultimate answer must be Jesus Christ. Digital wisdom begins with lordship, where we acknowledge that Jesus has the final authority over every domain of life, including the way we use our phones.

How can we apply the truth of Jesus' lordship in our daily lives? One way is to create a plan for godliness. Far from legalistic rigidity, this is a set of carefully chosen habits by which we obey God and grow in Christian maturity. It is a deliberate choice to proclaim with our lives that we want to be formed by Christ, not just algorithms.

We train for godliness because we want to hear from God. Jesus promises to give wisdom freely to those who ask, but we must first slow down enough to ask Him in the first place. The pace and noise of the internet make it hard to think clearly, let alone listen well. Brett McCracken is right to say that "the internet's dominance in our daily

lives often leaves little space to think about it well.” That’s why we take this month to step back from the most distracting parts of our phones. We block out the noise so we can hear the voice of God.

At the end of this book, you’ll find a worksheet to develop your own digital habits. Until then, we’re going to walk through some wise practices and spiritual disciplines that can (and should) transform the way you use your phone.

Today, remember that God is not distant. He’s constantly speaking to us through His Word and His people. But if your eyes are always buried in your phone, you will miss Him. You won’t get wisdom by staying distracted. Stop running. Stop making excuses. Look up and listen.

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**Pray:** Lord, quiet the noise around me so I can hear you clearly. As you speak, open my ears to listen, that I may respond with obedience.

**Reflect:** What would change if I really believed Jesus has the final say in how I use my time and attention?

# Choose Carefully

***Desire without knowledge is not good, and whoever makes haste with his feet misses his way.***

Proverbs 19:2

Technology scholar Neil Postman always asked two questions before using a new technology:

1. What problem does this technology solve?
2. What new problems do we create by solving this problem?

These questions are helpful. Every piece of technology has benefits and costs, though not always in equal measure. From the clock to the treadmill to social media, technology is really good at solving problems—but every advancement can also create *new* problems even worse than the ones it was created to solve.

Some technologies are worth the trade-off. Consider the car. Without Henry Ford and the assembly line, the global economy as we know it wouldn't exist. It would take weeks to visit distant friends or travel to Lynchburg for school. Yet over one million people die each year in road accidents. Cars are virtual necessities in suburbia, where most houses now feature imposing (and isolating) garages that replace once welcoming porches and front stoops. All these things considered, our world has collectively decided that the benefits of cars outweigh the costs.

Not all technologies, though, are worth the cost. Consider Instagram. It's a convenient way to update family, catch up with friends, compare political candidates, and learn about global missions efforts. Instagram has real positives—but it isn't as harmless as it might appear. Do we

ever stop to count the hidden costs caused not only by the platform's content but also by its very *design*? When we scroll on apps like Instagram, it's easy to become distracted from school and work, isolated from friends and roommates, and passively entertained without really resting. Everything (and therefore nothing) seems important when reels offer crises and comedies in rapid succession. We begin to discard information quickly and struggle to remember what matters most.

How, then, can we use our phones and their apps without paying a high price? Step back from your current technology use as much as possible; then, consider the value of each technology *slowly* and *intentionally*. Slowly, so we have the time and space to observe short- and long-term consequences. Intentionally, so we don't waste the one life God has given us scrolling on mindless or destructive technologies (Ephesians 5:16).

Postman believed that no technology is too dangerous if its users are aware of its dangers. That's why we should approach each technology with eyes wide open, fully aware of its opportunities and pitfalls.

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**Pray:** Lord, open my eyes to clearly see the costs and benefits of the digital technologies I use. Give me the wisdom to use technology as an "instrument for righteousness" yet keep it from conquering my soul.

**Reflect:** List out the benefits and costs of a social media feature (stories, short-form videos, etc.). Is the trade-off worth it for you? How might it change the way you relate to others and God?

# Step Away From the Screen

***So teach us to number our days that we may get a heart of wisdom.***

Psalm 90:12

Most of us cannot purge screens from our lives, but can we take time away from our screens?

A digital detox is a brief season of life, at least seven days, set aside to intentionally detach from social media, breaking news, video, gaming, and the compulsive magnets that attract our fingertips to our screens. Like all fasting, a digital detox is a way we can disconnect from good things to remember our love for the greatest thing.

Here are some keys to pulling off a rewarding digital detox.

## **1. Awaken to the attention economy (and get more sleep).**

All fasting is countercultural, but a digital fast cuts the cord from the pervasive sphere of images and spectacles that vie for our attention. The digital economy wants you to stay up until midnight online and then wake up to the buzz of your notifications in the morning and do it all over again. In 2017, Netflix's CEO named their main competitor—sleep. That's no joke. As we sever from our screens, as we become more attentive to what is not on a screen, we become more attentive to where God calls us to focus our attention. And then we can get more sleep!

## **2. Delete your apps (and go greyscale).**

I've never pulled off a digital detox without first deleting the social media apps from my phone and laptop. Some users hide the buttons in a buried folder. I find it best to get rid of them altogether (I can reinstall them later, in about fifteen minutes). Out of the range of my mouse

pointer and click-finger, the apps are, for me, rendered inaccessible. When Instagram is not handy, my phone habits change drastically.

For the apps you may need professionally and personally (email, phone, navigation, etc.), one trick is to mute your screen's colors for a season. Losing color makes pics, video, apps, and app badges less attractive and compulsive.

### **3. Refocus on spiritual disciplines (and soak in a greater approval).**

We grab the phone, turn off the alarm, and immediately start clicking around for digital candy. As we remove social media from our lives and our mornings, as we push the phone out of sight, we can more eagerly focus on the spiritual disciplines. A weeklong detox will help reset this priority in your life.

Until the love and acceptance found in Christ become real to you, all the love and approval your screens offer you will never satisfy the hunger you feel inside.

The endgame of a digital detox is not ascetic withdrawal. Most of us can't become digital hermits. The digital detox is a strategic recentering of our lives. May these times away from screens refresh our souls as we march toward an unseen heaven, elbowing our way through the clamoring marketplace dominated by the attention merchants.

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**Pray:** Make the love of Christ real in my heart, until I choose Him instead of the love and approval my screens offer.

**Reflect:** Are there any apps you feel you can't live without? Practically, how can you resist this temptation?

Adapted from Tony Reinke's "6 Keys to a Rewarding Digital Detox"

# Curate Your Stories

***The lines have fallen for me in pleasant places; indeed, I have a beautiful inheritance.***

Psalm 16:6

I was standing in Daedalus Books in Charlottesville, Virginia, and I had recently read Mortimer J. Adler's *How to Read a Book*. I was alive with the desire to read. But at the particular moment, my glee turned to horror. For whatever reason, the truth of the numbers suddenly hit me. The year before, I had read about thirty books. I was in my early twenties, and with any luck I'd live at least fifty more years. At that rate, I'd have about 1,500 books in me, give or take.

There were more books than that on the single wall I was staring at.

Suddenly my choices in that bookstore became a profound act of deciding. The Latin root of the word *decide*—*cise* or *cide*—is to “cut off” or “kill.” The idea is that to choose anything means to kill off other options you might have otherwise chosen. That day I realized that by choosing one story, I would have to cut off other stories. I would have to choose carefully. I would have to curate my stories.

But no books have ever come charging at me. It was hard enough to curate when I had to go to them. Now, however, we don't choose our stories nearly as much as they choose *us*. We are guaranteed to be formed in consumption unless we ruthlessly pursue curation.

Curation implies a sense of the good. An art gallery has limited space on the wall, so its curator creates shows to make the best use of that space according to a vision for good art. I suggest we have a vision for good stories—the stories that uphold beauty, teach us to love justice, and turn us to community—and curate accordingly.

Here are some practical ways to choose good stories over mediocre ones:

- **Audit your time.** I find keeping track of my time is an amazing way to show me what I care about. Track your media watching for a week, then set an hour goal for the next week.
- **Make great lists.** Instead of watching “what’s on” or something Netflix suggests, have a list of things worth watching. Look for movies and shows that are either so excellently made (signpost of beauty) they can’t be ignored or such crowd-pleasing tales (signpost of universal truth) that everyone should watch them.
- **Read long-form sources.** Devote little or no weekly media time to short-form news. Instead, find long-form articles, podcasts, and documentaries that are more likely to inform us about our vulnerable neighbors and send us out into the world instead of just boomeranging us into more media.
- **Watch most, if not all, media *with* someone else.** Sharing and loving the same canon of stories is one of the most significant ways that we create social cultures. Community also filters what you watch—we are more discerning when we choose together.

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**Pray:** Lord, I don’t need unlimited choices or an endless stream of content. Open my eyes to choose the stories that reveal the beauty and truth of the gospel, the ultimate story.

**Reflect:** The stories we watch tell us who we are and what we love. Take an honest look at your YouTube recommendations and Instagram reels. Do these algorithms reflect who you want to be and what you want to love?

Adapted from Justin Whitmel Earley’s *The Common Rule*

# Curate Your Space

***Turn my eyes from looking at worthless things; and give me life in your ways.***

Psalm 119:37

The best way to choose character is to make it part of the furniture. Fill the center of your life together—the literal center, the heart of your home, the place where you spend the most time—with the things that reward creativity, relationship, and engagement. Push technology and cheap thrills to the edges; move deeper and more lasting things to the core.

Though our central living space is by no means technology-free (as if any space can be that in an age of Wi-Fi and cell phones), it is still true that almost all the devices on our first floor can be—and regularly are—replaced by thoroughly nontechnological items. We have musical instruments. We have books. We've got a fireplace, which is the original glowing rectangle, and a table where we eat. We do not have any devices at that table, at least at the dinner hour or other mealtimes.

Where is technology's proper place? It's at the margins, rather than taking over the central place where we spend the most time. Find the place where you spend the most time and ruthlessly eliminate the things that ask little of you and develop little in you. Move the TV and phone to a less central location—and ideally a less comfortable one. And begin filling the space that is left over with opportunities for creativity and skill, beauty and risk.

If we want a better life, we will have to choose it—and the best way to choose it is to nudge and discipline ourselves toward the kind of life we most deeply want. We'll arrange the places we live and the patterns of our daily lives to make the best choice easier.

**Pray:** Lord, I am so weak. Many days, I fall back on what I know and give in to easy pleasures. Give me the creativity to arrange my living and working spaces for godliness, focus, and hospitality.

**Reflect:** Look around your dorm room or apartment. Are technologies at the center of your space? If so, what are three small changes that would improve the way you use your phone, TV, gaming systems, etc.?

Adapted from Andy Crouch's *The Tech-Wise Family*



Week IV

# **WAY OF FLOURISHING**

“Godliness comes through discipline.”

**- Donald Whitney**

# Scripture

***Oh how I love your law! It is my meditation all the day.***

Psalm 119:97

If we learned anything last week, it's that we need consistent and practical digital habits. God has already given us these habits through His Word, prayer, worship, community, and service. If we stick with these practices and trust God to work through them over time, we will begin to become more like Christ—and use our phones accordingly.

The first key practice is reading God's Word. Our phones can make us smart but not always *wise*—which is the ability to make sense of the world and live according to God's design. The only path to wisdom is through God's Word, and this is why believers have read, memorized, and meditated on Scripture for centuries.

**Read and listen.** We become what we consume—so consuming Scripture every morning instead of scrolling social media will start to make us into very different kind of people. Just as the Israelites gathered manna every morning, so do our souls long for the nourishment of the Word each day.

Practically, the best way to be watered by the Word is to read the Bible, every day. At first, try a simple plan that you can reasonably complete, perhaps one chapter in the morning. Over time, maybe read straight through the Psalms, New Testament, or whole Bible in a year to experience the grand narrative of Scripture.

**Memorize.** Donald Whitney said that “if we would know God and be godly, we must know the Word of God—intimately.” Memorizing a verse or passage is an investment in our spiritual effectiveness. When we are tempted to fall back into habitual sins, we can pray with the psalmist, “I

have stored up your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you” (Psalm 119:11). When we doubt God’s goodness or falter in faith, we can remember His specific promises. When others face crises, we can offer more than our own comfort. We can offer the very words of God.

**Meditate.** Some who know Scripture may appear godly but still have a hard heart and unchanged life (2 Timothy 3:5-7). Biblical meditation is how we move biblical truth from the head to the heart. Dr. Eunice Chung defines this practice as “the ongoing process of pondering the things of God based on Scripture.” Through slow, careful meditation on God’s words, we begin to trust them as the path to life. Meditation also grows our love and affection for God’s Word, as we savor His promises that are “sweeter than honey” (Psalm 119:103).

Jesus said that the wise person “hears these words of mine and does them” (Matthew 7:24). This is how we begin to obey God and find wisdom: read, memorize, and meditate on His Word.

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**Pray:** Lord, may I see my daily Bible reading not as a dry routine but rather as the discipline by which you are forming me into the likeness of your Son. As I read, grow my love for your Word!

**Reflect:** Consider the three areas of Bible reading, memory, and meditation. Which practice comes most easily? Which practice do you want to grow in? How will you do this?

# Prayer

***But Jesus Himself would often slip away to the wilderness and pray.***

Luke 5:16

Jesus' earthly ministry was filled with buzz and activity, healings and teachings—yet the Son of God always seemed to find time to pray. While these prayers were often solitary, Jesus also invited his disciples into his prayer life. The twelve didn't always pay the best attention, though; just before his betrayal by Judas, Jesus and several disciples went to pray in the Garden of Gethsemane. Jesus persevered in prayer, but on returning to his disciples, he found them fast asleep.

We are not very unlike the disciples. Has our own weakness and weariness become an excuse for prayerlessness? Might we be asleep to the things of God because we let the noise of our phones drown out the sound of his voice?

Jesus expects us to stay awake—praying as he did—because prayer helps us become like him. Just as Jesus set aside time to pray to his Father, our prayers can block out the disorienting noise of the world and help us hear the voice of our Father. Jesus has not left us alone to pursue this life of prayer. Rather, he has given us the power of the Spirit and the pattern of his own prayers to shape and empower our own prayers.

Take a moment to read the Lord's Prayer (Matthew 6:9-13). As you read, look for the key themes of Jesus' prayer. Consider what it would look like to model your own prayers after Jesus' example.

**God's holiness (verse 9).** Jesus began his prayer by honoring and revering God as Father. In the same way, we can praise God for his wonder, majesty, and perfection. Pray that your heart might be devoted to God alone and not distracted by created goods like technology.

**God's kingdom and will (verse 10).** Jesus responds to the character of his Father with humble worship. We too can respond with worship and ask God to accomplish his will in every inch of our lives, including our technology use. Again, the point of this Digital Rest is *not* to totally reject technology. Rather, the point is to ask Jesus how we can follow him with our technology—so ask him!

**God's provision (verse 11).** Jesus depends on God for his every need. In the same way, we can ask God for wisdom and guidance for using technology well. Donald Whitney said that “where God leads you to pray, He means you to receive.” God is willing and able to guide you in making wise decisions, so again, ask for the wisdom you need!

**God's forgiveness (verse 12).** Though Jesus did not sin, he still graciously models godly confession. We should always be quick to confess unwise technology use to God, trusting that he will forgive the truly repentant. We need God's forgiveness every day, but especially this month, as a digital rest void of grace would be impossible.

**God's power (verse 13).** Jesus models what it looks like to trust in God as the one who is in control. Though our devices propose something new every moment, God never changes, and He alone is a foundation worth building our lives on. Jesus is more powerful than technology!

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**Pray:** Father, may I come to you in prayer when I feel overwhelmed by the noise of the world. Help me to hear your voice above all others and walk in your peace.

**Reflect:** Pray through Matthew 6:9-13. How has God helped you in surrendering technology to him? Where are you allowing the buzz of the world to keep you from prayer?

# Worship

***Because your steadfast love is better than life, my lips will praise you.***

Psalm 63:3

“Are you singing enough?”

This was the title of an email that ironically found its way to my inbox via my junk email address. Out of curiosity, I clicked the link, which opened an article by a music therapist who outlined the health benefits of a life filled with song. Music can reduce stress, boost our cognition, strengthen our immune and respiratory systems, and actually make us better at bonding with others.

As I read about the benefits of singing for even just our physical bodies, I couldn't help but remember the words of the psalmist: “For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Your works are wonderful; I know that full well” (Psalm 139:13-14).

It is readily apparent in the Scriptures that God has a singing people in mind. By my count, there are at least one hundred and three words throughout the Old and New Testament that reference worship, singing, and praise. That's not surprising. Of course, the Word of God, the Creator and Sustainer of the universe, would have something to say about what it means to worship Him!

What I find fascinating is that so much of a life led by the Holy Spirit is consumed with praise, and it seems that God actually instructs us to praise as part of our worship. The psalmist tells the people of God to “sing to the Lord a new song” (33:3), “make a joyful noise before the King” (98:6), “lift up our hands and bless the Lord” (134:2), and “praise the Lord with dancing, making melody to Him” (149:3). Over and over,

the congregation of Israel is invited to praise the Lord together: “Oh magnify the Lord with me, let us exalt His name together!” (34:3).

Notice one thing about these Scriptures: these aren’t suggestions as much as they are *commands*. God, as the Great Physician, has given His people a prescription: a life of worship. Part of that prescription is that we sing! How beautiful is this truth: our Holy God does not only create people with an engine that runs solely on Him, but part of the oil that sends the vehicle down the road is lifting up song to Him.

May we never miss an opportunity to put down our phones and lift up our hands to worship our King!

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**Pray:** Lord, when my heart is heavy and my flesh is weak, remind me that your Word commands me to lift up a song and a sacrifice of praise to you. Help me remember that worship is your prescription for my soul.

**Reflect:** What opportunities can you take to “sing to the Lord a new song” this week? Where can you add song into your everyday practice of worshipping God?

Written by Judd Harris

# Community

***Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.***

Philippians 2:4

Every January 1, many of us wake up before the sun to hit the gym, read the Bible, and actually eat some breakfast with our coffee for once. This is the year (we hope) that we will finally change! But by February, most of us lose our ambition and fall back on old habits.

The issue with New Year's resolutions is not necessarily that we set bad goals. The problem is that we try to accomplish our resolutions *on our own*, absent from any real accountability or encouragement from others.

The same is true in our spiritual lives. Shaped by our culture's commitment to rugged individualism, we often think that the path to spiritual growth runs straight through our "private" spiritual disciplines. But God didn't create spiritual disciplines to be totally private, nor does he expect us to white-knuckle our own way into eternal life! Rather, He designed us to live by grace in community with other people. In his perfect wisdom, Jesus works through others to mature our faith.

This is why we need community—and not just any group of friends but a distinctly Christian community that is willing to challenge each other and do what it takes to become godly. Christian friends are a blessing in so many ways, but three things especially stand out:

**Christian friends help us reach our goals.** It's easier to resist temptation and do hard things if a friend does it too. We might actually go to the gym if a friend is waiting for us. We might actually stop scrolling before midnight if our roommates also keep their phones across the room. It's often the case that our best friends are the ones

who are willing to say “Stop!” when we fall back into old habits. Those are the kind of people we should invite to speak into every part of our lives!

**Christian friends help us repent of sin.** We will fail on the way toward godliness and may try to get back up on our own. Yet honest repentance and real accountability to others will get us much further than willpower. God gives us Christian friends for this very reason, that we may confess our sins “to one another...that you may be healed” (James 5:16). This is how cycles of sin are finally broken: “Two are better than one...for if they fall, one will lift up his fellow” (Ecclesiastes 4:9-10).

**Christian friends help us rejoice!** Obedience and repentance can often feel like a heavy burden, but God intends for us to enjoy time with friends along the way.

Friendships marked by God’s grace will always get us further than our resolutions. So, find godly friends full of grace, and start being that friend too.

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**Pray:** Lord, thank you for the family, friends, roommates, and classmates that you have given me. Help me lean on their wisdom and joy as I walk through this life.

**Reflect:** Write down some people in your life who help you reach goals, repent of sin, and rejoice. Note any category that is lacking. Who could I ask to help?

# Service

***For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.***

Galatians 5:13

George Bailey wanted to get *out*—out of his hometown of Bedford Falls, out of every obligation keeping him from the good life. He dreamed of building skyscrapers, exploring the world, and answering to no one but himself. Freedom, he thought, meant doing whatever he wanted.

But every time he reached for that freedom, something (or someone) kept him in Bedford Falls. A struggling savings-and-loan, a family who needed him, a town full of ordinary people who needed loans, generosity, and second chances. George eventually came to the end of his rope, realizing that he might never leave his small town.

Millions of people have resonated with George Bailey's struggle in the iconic film *It's a Wonderful Life*. Like George, we want to be free—free of every restraint on our personal autonomy, free of anything that keeps us from instant gratification and future dreams. Our phones affirm this desire, telling us that we are free when we can do whatever we want, whenever we want, without anyone needing anything from us. Scroll past the need. Block the drama. Ghost the inconvenience. Freedom, we think, is a life without interruptions.

The apostle Paul agrees that we are “called to freedom.” But this freedom is not what George Bailey thought it was. Paul says that we are *free to serve*. Freedom is not the ability to do whatever we want; in Christ, it is the ability to joyfully submit our will to another. True freedom is found in limits.

Jesus is the one who turned the world's idea of freedom on its head. The freest man who ever lived “did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many” (Mark 10:45). He who had every right to be waited on hand and foot did not count equality with God something to be grasped but took the form of a servant, wrapped a towel around his waist, and washed his disciples' feet. He who could have called twelve legions of angels let his enemies nail him to a cross—because freedom, for Jesus, was never about his own pleasure. Jesus freely gave his life away in love for his friends.

Our phones train us to gaze on ourselves, on our own preferences, desires, and dreams. But service is God's way of lifting our eyes. When we serve, we begin to look up and see those God has placed around us. By serving these people, we begin to experience true freedom as God designed it. As George Bailey finally realized, it is only when we choose to serve others that we can really say, “It's a wonderful life.”

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**Pray:** Lord Jesus, you are the freest person who ever lived, but you choose to spend that freedom on me. Teach me to spend mine the same way—by serving the people you love!

**Reflect:** Look up. Who is God asking you to truly see this week? How can you serve them?





# Conclusion

For one month, we put down our phones to block out the noise of the world and listen to God in prayer and His Word. But what now? After the Digital Rest is over, will you fall back on your old screen time habits? Will you only remember your phone's opportunities and forget its hidden costs?

Studies have shown that people who treat this month as a quick "detox" do not see long-term improvement in their phone usage. It's far better to replace digital distractions with higher-quality activities, like creative hobbies and spiritual disciplines. These stronger habits and greater joys keep the lesser pleasure of the phone in its right place!

So don't waste this month or forget what you learned. Make a plan for godliness! Write down some positive digital habits, and stick to them. These habits should be measurable, realistic, and built to last far beyond this month.

Pastor Darren Whitehead outlines some habits to consider:

1. Designate tech-free zones
2. Out of sight, out of mind
3. Turn off non-essential notifications
4. Set specific times for checking notifications
5. Delete unnecessary apps
6. Use screen time features
7. Regular digital detoxes

# Resources

## How To Fight Digital Temptation

### When I'm tired and just want to doomscroll...

Memorize Psalm 4:8, Psalm 62:5-6, Matthew 11:28-30, and Philippians 4:6-7.

Will this give me the rest I really want? What could I do right now that would be more satisfying?

### When I'm tempted to give in to lust...

Memorize Psalm 119:9-11, Psalm 119:37, Romans 6:11-14, and 2 Timothy 2:22.

Remember that sins that seems small and private are not harmless, for "desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death" (James 1:14-15).

### When I want a new technology...

Memorize Luke 12:15, 1 John 2:15-17.

What problem does this technology solve in my life? What new problems, distractions, or addictions could this technology add to my life?

### Before I use artificial intelligence...

Examine the benefits and hidden costs. What abilities and skills might I lose? Are the trade-offs worth it?

## **The Practice of Fasting**

The concept of the Digital Rest is drawn from the biblical practice of fasting. Throughout Scripture and church history, godly men and women have temporarily set aside normal food intake and replaced it with prayer and biblical meditation. The purpose of fasting is not to show off our holiness before others; rather, the church fasts to seek the Lord in undistracted prayer and to remind ourselves of our total dependence on His provision. Like the Digital Rest, we set aside a good gift from God for a time to spend more time in prayer.

This semester, we invite you to fast and pray for one day, from sunset to sunset. Find some friends and begin one of the following fasts, depending on your personal health and life situation:

### **1) Full Fast**

Abstain from all solid food; only consume water.

### **2) Daniel Fast (Plant-Based)**

Abstain from meat, dairy, or processed foods; only consume vegetables, fruits, and water.

### **3) Modified Performance Fast**

Abstain from all foods except those that are medically or physically necessary for safe functioning or prescribed performance nutrition (e.g., minimal calories for athletic performance, blood-sugar control, or an ongoing medical need).

## Deeper Study

- *The Common Rule* – Justin Whitmel Earley
- *The Digital Fast* – Darren Whitehead
- *The Tech-Wise Family* – Andy Crouch
- *Scrolling Ourselves to Death* – Brett McCracken and Ivan Mesa
- *Amusing Ourselves to Death* – Neil Postman
- *The Anxious Generation* – Jonathan Haidt
- *Digital Minimalism* – Cal Newport
- *A Christian Field Guide to Technology for Engineers and Designers* – Ethan Brue, Derek Schuurman, and Steve VanderLeest

## Digital Habits

Plan 1-3 digital habits that are *practical* and *achievable*. Who could encourage you to actually practice these habits?

1.

2.

3.

Think about the ways you can change your phone use in the following areas of life.

Spirituality	
Friendship	
School and Work	
Rest	



