

# Daily Devotional: Things That Matter

## Theme: Technology

### Verse of the Day:

*“Everything is permissible for me—but not everything is beneficial.*

*Everything is permissible for me—but I will not be mastered by anything.”*

—1 Corinthians 6:12 (NIV)

### Technology: A Tool or a Trap?

Technology has changed everything. We can track our loved ones, watch our front door from miles away, scroll endlessly on social media, play games, and binge-watch entire seasons in one weekend—all from our phones. It can be useful, convenient, and even necessary. But just because we *can* do something doesn't mean we *should*.

The **average American now spends 4.5 to 5 hours a day on their smartphone**, with more than **80 apps** downloaded—most of which go unused but still track our behavior and draw us in with constant notifications. Children ages **8 to 18** are logging **7.5+ hours of screen time daily**, and even **preschoolers ages 2 to 5** are averaging **2–3 hours a day**.

These aren't just stats—they represent real consequences.

### The Negative Effects of Technology on Our Lives

#### 1. Increased Anxiety and Depression

Studies from organizations like the **CDC** and the **American Academy of Pediatrics** have shown that high screen time is directly linked to increased levels of anxiety and depression in children and teens. Social media comparison, cyberbullying, and online isolation all contribute to rising mental health concerns.

#### 2. Decreased Attention Span

The constant stimulation from screens is rewiring our brains. The average attention span in humans has dropped to **around 8 seconds**—shorter than that of a goldfish. Children especially are struggling to stay focused in school, in conversations, and even during play.

#### 3. Sleep Disruption

Blue light from screens suppresses melatonin production, making it harder for kids and adults to fall asleep and stay asleep. Many teens go to bed with their phones, resulting in poor sleep quality and fatigue the next day.

#### **4. Poor Social Skills**

Children raised with devices in hand are showing delays in emotional development and communication. Many can't hold eye contact, engage in meaningful conversation, or handle conflict face-to-face. Screens are replacing connection.

#### **5. Exposure to Online Dangers**

- **1 in 3 teens** has been cyberbullied.
- **Over 50% of teens** report receiving or sending explicit messages or photos (sexting).
- Kids are being groomed by predators via social media and gaming platforms—many under their parents' radar.

It's like the "don't talk to strangers" rule has been tossed out the window—and replaced with "Here, talk to millions of strangers 24/7."

#### **6. Erosion of Family Time and Marriages**

Phones on the dinner table. Couples scrolling instead of speaking. Parents distracted while their kids beg for attention. The emotional distance caused by excessive phone use is real—and dangerous. Intimacy is lost when screen time replaces face time.

#### **So What Can We Do?**

**We take it back. We reclaim it. We set boundaries and make it matter.**

In our home, Natalie didn't get a phone until she was 13—and she was mad about it. But I knew what mattered more than her temporary frustration. We monitored apps, restricted game content, and encouraged time outside—riding the golf cart in the swamp, swimming, or fishing.

I know it's hard, parents. But here's what can help:

#### **Practical Steps for God-Honoring Technology Use**

##### **1. Set Clear Boundaries**

- a. No phones at the table.
- b. No devices after bedtime.
- c. Use parental controls (Verizon, Apple Screen Time, etc.).
- d. Limit social media access.

##### **2. Keep the Conversation Open**

Talk to your kids about what they're watching, who they're talking to, and what to do if something online makes them uncomfortable.

##### **3. Model Healthy Behavior**

Our kids are watching us. If we're glued to our phones, they will be too. Lead by example.

#### **4. Use Tech for Good**

- a. Bible apps
- b. Worship playlists
- c. Online sermons
- d. Encouraging messages
- e. Texting someone a prayer or Scripture
- f. Video calls to pray with friends or family

#### **5. Protect Your Marriage**

Don't let your phone be the third wheel in your relationship. Set aside intentional, tech-free time with your spouse every day.

#### **Prayer:**

*Heavenly Father, thank You for the gift of innovation—but remind us to use it wisely. Help us protect our hearts, our homes, and our children from the enemy's schemes. Show us how to set boundaries, guard our minds, and model what healthy, God-honoring use of technology looks like. Help us choose presence over distraction. In Jesus' name, Amen.*

#### **Today's Challenge:**

**Go screen-free for one full hour.**

Put the phones down. Talk to your family. Ask your kids questions. Pray together. Be present. Let them know they matter more than a notification.

**Let's not be mastered by our phones—let's master them for God's glory.**

## Discussion Questions:

- **How much time do you personally spend on your phone or device each day?**  
What are your top-used apps, and are they drawing you closer to God—or further from Him?
- **Have you ever felt more anxious, distracted, or emotionally drained after being online?** What role might technology be playing in your mental or spiritual health?
- **How has technology impacted your relationships with your spouse, children, or friends?** Are there habits you need to break or boundaries you need to build?
- **What boundaries are currently in place for technology in your home?**  
Are they effective? What could you change starting this week?
- **Parents: How are your children being shaped by their screen time?**  
Are you actively involved in monitoring their apps, games, and conversations?
- **What's one way you can use your phone or device this week to glorify God?**  
(Examples: Send an encouraging verse, start a Bible reading plan, FaceTime a friend and pray.)
- **Do you think your family could commit to a “screen-free hour” each day?**  
What would that look like—and what might God do during that time?