



CHAPTER 5 – “The Church, Technology, and Purity”

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Identify the Problem

As noted at the beginning of this chapter, we as the church have a responsibility to be involved in reaching and shaping the culture with the Gospel. But often times the culture comes into our homes uninvited.

Listen to this excerpt from pp. 121-122 in The Church in Babylon.

How have you seen this happening in your home or someone else’s? How did we get to this point? How do we prevent it from happening?

We must be aware that once one gets hooked on something like a violent video game or pornography it is just as hard an addiction to break as being on drugs or alcohol due to the neural pathways that are carved in the frontal lobe of the brain. This means that we need to attack the monster of technology before it attacks us. We will talk about how to do that later, but let’s start with looking at why many don’t attack this monster.

The lack of a gameplan in dealing with the evils of technology stem from believing at least three myths in regards to technology Dr. Lutzer writes of here in chapter 5. These are the very things that speak to how we have found ourselves in such a mess in regards to video game, social media, and pornography addictions.

The Myths We Believe About Technology

i. We believe the lie that technology is neutral.

Every website, news cast, and podcast are brought to us with a bias and an agenda. Everything that comes into our minds through our eyes and ears come with someone's worldview and agenda attached to it. If we're being raw and honest we will recognize that most of what comes through our screens and earbuds are diametrically opposed to Jesus, His Word, and the principles laid out in His Word. TECHNOLOGY IS NOT NEUTRAL!

2. We believe the lie that what we watch and hear doesn't affect us.

Countless studies have proven that violent video games as well as other media produce both short-term and long-term aggressive behavior in minors and adults.¹ Pornography is even more addictive. Not only does it curve neural pathways in the brain that become larger with each exposure to pornography but it actually causes a disconnect between the neurons that are supposed to be firing across the synapses of the brain.

In the book Right Thinking for a Culture in Chaos by John MacArthur we learn that not only does pornography ravage the human mind but so does something as seemingly harmless as social media. In the chapter titled "Digital Dangers" from Dr. MacArthur's book he identifies five different dangers associated with the digital world, and social media in particular.

Digital Dangers Associated with Social Media:

A. A false sense of intimacy.

In place of true closeness, love, appreciation, and honesty people are engaged in surface level tweets and trying to gain as many Facebook friends or Instagram followers as possible. There is no shortcut to authentic intimacy, it takes work, but social media has provided a "quick fix" that will never satisfy and often leads to destructive patterns of isolation as well as living a life that is purely fantasy.

B. A false sense of isolation.

We get so wrapped up in ourselves and believing that the entire world cares about what our day was like that we get more and more disconnected from those who are actually present in our lives. The more we engage in social media, the more we become socially disconnected with the people present in our lives.

¹ Jamanetwork.com/journals/jamapediatrics/fullarticle/204790.

C. A false sense of intelligence.

A wealth of information is available on the internet and social media and many regurgitate that info making themselves sound intelligent regarding many different topics but little critical thinking in regards to why that info may or may not be true is usually employed. Critical thinking entails gathering facts, analyzing and testing those facts, and then discerning what is actually true in regards to what God has revealed to us in creation and His Word.

D. A false sense of image.

The images on social media are almost always of the perfect by photoshop, the happy moments in one's family, the recipes that always turned out right, and anything else that makes the one doing the "posting" look good. Those that are watching then compare themselves to these images, almost always fall short, and develop this sense of depression or guilt for not measuring up to the façade portrayed.

E. A false sense of importance.

Social media lures us into believing that we are the center of the universe and that everyone actually cares what's happening every moment of our lives. The worst part is the development of self-worship and taking away from the worship of the one who actually is the center of the universe, Jesus.

3. We believe the lie that we can "turn it off" anytime we want.

Addiction to technology is not only widespread but it rewires our brains. Psychiatrist Thomas Kersting noted that he sees many children in his practice that have had the use of technology affect their ability to flourish while also producing anxiety, depression, and attention span issues.²

Once addicted to pornography, video games, or social media it will take rehab to recover. It isn't as simple as "turning it off", which is why we must have tools for prevention and recovery.

Discover the Solution

² Thomas Kersting, *Disconnected: How to Reconnect Our Digitally Distracted Young People* (CreateSpace, 2016).

Now that we know the dangers of technology in the areas of the internet, social media, video games, movies, and more, we must also know of the strategy God's Word gives for winning the battle of the mind. It is laid out in many places, but one of the clearest comes from the writing of the Apostle Paul in **2 Corinthians 10:3-6**. Let's read his words to a church that needed serious correction in regards to how they thought, spoke, and lived.

³ For though we walk in the flesh, we are not waging war according to the flesh. ⁴ For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds. ⁵ We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ, ⁶ being ready to punish every disobedience, when your obedience is complete.

(2 Corinthians 10:3-6)

There are two things we are taught in regards to winning the war that has been waged for our minds that we will break down here and then we will discuss specific steps under the heading "Apply the Solution".

Winning the War for Our Minds

Read 2 Corinthians 10:3-4

I. We must choose the right weapons. (2 Corinthians 10:3-4)

The first weapon that Paul employs is that of *humility*. Notice he said, "*though we walk in the flesh.*" Paul was admitting that in his own flesh he would have no victory over anything. We must never allow ourselves to think we have sin mastered as that will be our undoing. The second thing Paul says is, "*we are not waging war according to the flesh.*" The Greek word for "waging war" is *strateuo* and is where we get our word "strategy". So, Paul employs humility, admitting he could never defeat sin on his own but then goes on to say we must have a godly strategy for defeating sin or we are left vulnerable. He then goes on to say that if our weaponry and strategy is from God's Word and not from self that it has divine power to destroy strongholds, and that would include things like social media lies, pornography, and violence.

Read 2 Corinthians 10:5-6

2. We must employ the right battle plan. (2 Corinthians 10:5-6)

In these two verse the Apostle Paul lays out a three-stage plan for defeating sin:

A. We must destroy every thought or idea brought to our minds that is against the Word of God. – This means we must discern truth from error according to the Word of God.

B. We must take every thought captive. – Identify where the thought came from don't allow it to linger in the mind.

C. We must punish sin. – A gameplan for discipline is a must and not just brushing sin off.

Below we will unpack the practical solutions to **choosing the right weapons and employing the right battle plan.**

Apply the Solution

Choosing the Right Weapons:

Read Matthew 4:1-11

1. We must know what the Word of God says... *"It is written."*

This only happens if we are consistently in the Word of God and we have established a period of time for being in it daily, established a place where that will happen, and have a plan when we are in the Word.

2. We must know why the Word of God can be trusted... *"Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God." "You shall worship the Lord your God and Him only shall you serve."*

Jesus knew and taught that only what God offered would bring lasting satisfaction and to worship anything else would bring about want, confusion, and death.

Employing the Right Battle Plan:

Read Psalm 119:9-16

1. Study God's Word. (Psalm 119:9-10)

Get to know it well through careful and thorough study. A great help here would be Dr. Howard Hendricks book Living By the Book.

2. Memorize God's Word. (Psalm 119:11)

An old fashioned 3x5 card with a verse a day taken with you recited 10 times in the morning, 5 times in the afternoon, 3 times in the evening, and once right before bed is a proven strategy for cementing God's Word in your head.

3. Pray for God's will and God's Word to be that which you delight in most. (Psalm 119:12-16)

It will take mental exercise but when we constantly get into God's Word, delight in His Word, and pray for Him to cause a deep love within us for Him and His Word we will begin to see the things of the world as unsatisfactory. Our appetites are a strong lure in regards to what we

eat, and that is physically, mentally, and spiritually. Therefore, we must train our appetites to crave the things of God's will and Word.

4. Study those things that cause a craving for the things of Christ.

It isn't until we crave Christ more than our sin that we will break free from its lures and temptations. Below you will see listed a resource that will help you crave and treasure Christ above all else as well as resource to develop a gameplan for defeating entrenched sin

Recommended Resources

Living By the Book by Howard Hendricks

The Things of Earth by Joe Rigney

The Enemy Within by Kris Lungaard