

Technology & Parents

Key Ideas

- Technology is good. It is the result of people fulfilling God's creation mandate given in Genesis. Human beings are meant to take what exists and make something of it. However, technology, like the rest of the world, is affected by sin.
- All of the negatives related to technology don't mean we should burn all devices from here on out! Rather, it means we need to be more intentional in placing good boundaries on them. Besides, technology isn't all bad. It provides connection, communication, education, access, a chance to have a voice, encouragement, and humor.
- We need to see smartphones as massive responsibilities, equivalent to driving a car. We wouldn't let our kids drive a car without training them first, so we must take the same approach to having a smartphone.
- Adults are often just as addicted to technology as teenagers are. When asked, 'what's the number one thing you would like to change in your relationship with your parents if you could,' the number one answer from teenagers was, 'I wish my parents would spend less time on their phone or on their screen and would talk to me more.'
- Digital devices make pornography extremely easy to access, whether someone seeks it out or not. Make sure and put good filters and protections in place first.
- Implementing parental controls should take place in the context of open and ongoing conversations with your children.
- When to let your kids get a device or a social media account will vary based on age (legally, no younger than 13 for social media), maturity, their friendships/influences, how well you can trust them, and whether you've already had conversations with them about porn, sexting, online predators, and cyberbullying.

Practical Applications

- Model the right behaviors and model what a true connection with your family looks like. Replay the last 168 hours or the last week. Would you want your kids doing, watching, and checking as much where you did those things?
- Ask your family if they ever feel like you ignore them because you're doing something on your phone or computer; humbly take their feedback, and be open to hearing how you can improve on putting your attention where it needs to be.
- When your kids challenge boundaries, tell them, "I love you; I would never leave you unprotected." Then ask them to explain how something is beneficial. Say yes as much as you can, but don't be afraid to give consequences and boundaries.
- Designate technology-free periods throughout the week/month/year. For a set period of time (24 hours, three days, two weeks, etc.), get away from your regular routine, disengage from technology, and make space to connect as a family. Make this time fun and meaningful!
- Put raw materials in your kids' paths (a piano, an arts and crafts table, etc.). Give them opportunities and spaces to be creative away from devices.
- Explain the 'Why' when you are talking about anything with your children, including putting boundaries on technology.
- Practice the same limits that you put on your kids' devices. Any precaution that you set up for your children you also need to practice.
- Scan the QR code on the back to access the Phase Life Map that can help you customize your approach to your child based on their current phase of life.

Reflection and Discussion Questions

- *What technology habits am I modeling for my family? What are they learning about how to use their devices from watching me?*
- *Do I have any device-free spaces or times? Why or why not?*
- *What guidelines can I sit down and implement with each of my children? What would work best for each of my children's personalities?*
- *What are some things that I do not understand in technology that my children could teach me about and give me insight into?*
- *What are some ways that I can use technology to connect with my kids?*

Resources

- Screen and Teens by Kathy Koch
- The Techwise Family by Andy Crouch
- Tech Savvy Parenting by Brian Housman
- Touchy Subjects: Talking to Kids about Sex, Tech, and Social Media in a Touchscreen World by Craig Gross
- Disconnected: How to Reconnect Our Digitally Distracted Kids by Thomas Kersting
- The Collapse of Parenting: How We Hurt Our Kids When We Treat Them Like Grown-Ups by Leonard Sax
- Axis.org and their technology/culture guides
- Accountability Apps: Disney Circle, Covenant Eyes, Qustodio

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