



“What did people do when they went to the bathroom before smart phones?”

Aaron Cobra Mervis

““There are few times that I feel more at peace, more in tune, . . . than when I force myself to unplug.”

Harlan Coben

Let’s face it. . . . we have a love/hate relationship with our devices. We love what they can do for us because we have the world at our fingertips, and yet we hate that they seem to hold us captive to their influence. The latter is obvious by our dependency on and time management of technology.

Much has been studied and written about the effects of technology on the individual. Our devices have changed the way we “do life” in a myriad of ways from connecting with others, doing business, and shopping, to how we view entertainment and receive news.

What about technology and its influence on the inner life? Can the texts and images that scroll past us at accelerated speed day in and day out do a number on our souls? Do we find ourselves spending more and more time on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Messenger and the like? In other words, technologically speaking, “How is it with your soul?” This study is not, dear reader, a slap on the wrist because of your dependency on being plugged in or a call to throw out your iPad, cell phone or computer. The digital age is here to stay and has infiltrated every aspect of life. We all need to take a good look at our day to see when we could, for some intentional moments, unplug for the sake of our soul.

*Technology has a way of distorting our reality, or presenting a different reality to others. The things we see and the things we send to the world do not always tell the whole story.*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0EFHbruKEmw>

We live an increasingly sound–polluted and frenetic life and therefore need, now more than ever, to become deliberate about seeking to turn from the complex wiles of the world to the simplicity of the love of God. Consider some of these benefits for becoming unplugged and finding more space for your soul to connect with God:

“*The best things in life aren’t things*” (Art Buchwald) – Virtual reality removes us from reality, so don’t miss the life that is happening right in front of you! Phone calls and FaceTime are wonderful inventions, but nothing can replace being in the same room having face to face contact to enjoy every nuance of connecting with someone.

*Quietness for your soul is harder when connected.* Silence and solitude will always take intentional action to quiet the distractions from without. Turn off the computer, put your cell phone on vibrate and place it in another room. This is only the beginning to dispelling the noise, as there are internal voices that can be more challenging, but this is a place to start.

*Staying connected can conjure negative feelings.* Researchers have concluded that one out of every three people scrolling Facebook do not always have a feeling of connection and community with their Facebook friends. Studies show Facebook users dealing with feelings of emptiness and jealousy as they view Facebook friends’ activities.<sup>7</sup>

The writers of the Bible had no idea of our digital lives, but they understood the importance of harnessing time with God and the seriousness of taking a sober look at those things that would rob us of that time, and then taking steps to regain good spiritual equilibrium.

<sup>7</sup> Sifferlin, Alexandra. “Why Facebook Makes You Feel Bad About Yourself.” *Time*, *Time*, 24 Jan. 2013, [healthland.time.com/2013/01/24/why-facebook-makes-you-feel-bad-about-yourself/](http://healthland.time.com/2013/01/24/why-facebook-makes-you-feel-bad-about-yourself/).

## Place it all before God

Read the following selected verses from Psalm 139 (NLT) in light of your relationship with technology.

*“O Lord, you have examined my heart and know everything about me. You know when I sit down or stand up. You know my thoughts even when I’m far away. You see me when I travel and when I rest at home. You know everything I do. You know what I am going to say even before I say it, Lord.”*

Psalm 139:1–4 NLT

*As you reflect on God’s presence regarding your use of technology, what feelings arise? Are there areas when it is a positive influence, and are there times when the use of your devices has a negative effect?*

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*“You go before me and follow me. You place your hand of blessing on my head. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, too great for me to understand!”*

Psalm 139:5–6 NLT

*From your response to the first question, is there anything God is inviting you to in the area of your time and attention to technology?*

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*“Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. Point out anything in me that offends You, and lead me along the path of everlasting life.”*

Psalm 139:23–24 NLT

*Now that this area of your life has been investigated by the Holy Spirit, are you feeling drawn to a change in your connection to technology? What is He calling you to resolve moving forward? If there is a change He is calling you to consider, ask Him to help you make it realistic and reasonable.*

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## Prayer:

*“Lord, I am so often overtaken by machines, trapped by technology... Sometimes I feel controlled by what I should be controlling.*

*Help me to find my life again, enhanced and not eroded by these technical aids. Help me to take control, at least in my heart, and put them in their place. I do know that it is really a useful, impressive tool... But I know too that it is a tool to be subordinate to human needs and human cares.*

*May technology serve us Lord, so that we may better serve one another, and You.*

*Amen”<sup>8</sup>*

<sup>8</sup> Astley, Jeff. “Prayer for Use of Technology.” *After Sunday, After Sunday*, [www.aftersunday.org.uk/prayer/for-work/technology](http://www.aftersunday.org.uk/prayer/for-work/technology).

