

Study Guide – Screenagers - Unsocial Media, from 11-19-2017

Warming Up

Technology items are greatly prized as Christmas presents, and they give hope for a better life, convenience, entertainment, and virtual relationships. But, as Pastor Bobby pointed out, middle school children were diagnosed with anxiety disorders last year more than the last seven years combined. What other practices or addictions give the spoken or assumed promise of happiness, but, in the end, eventually bring anxiety instead? Discuss.

Takeaway # 1 – Disconnection – Dissolving Quality Time

Pastor Bobby said that “When we get in front of a screen, we go from communicating to isolating.” Ephesians 5:15-16 reads, “See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil.” What will it take for a person to realize that he or she lost so much real, personal, face to face time with loved ones and friends by burying themselves in technology – whether it is TV, a computer, phone, or a tablet? What can be the wake-up calls that bring us to walk circumspectly (watchfully and well-thought out), and redeem the short time that we actually have?

Pastor Bobby pointed out the similarity between wasting time and wasting money. Wise money managers make a budget, and control expenses within the confines of income. Our time is set. Unlike money, we can’t make more of it. What do you think of the idea of making a budget for time that gets spent before a screen – a diet from over-screening? Some parents do this for their children, but what about all of us? As Pastor Bobby pointed out, technology is useful and not inherently bad. After all, it is used to spread the gospel. It just needs to be managed. Are you willing to manage it by putting it in a budget or on a diet of time spent on it every day? Really?

Takeaway # 2 – Self-Focused

During this message, we saw several clips. What do you think about the comments made by the first president of Facebook and those of the persons on the Laura Ingraham Show? Do these comments open your eyes in any way? Discuss.

It’s an easy temptation to justify use on screens as really a good way to have or expand relationships with others, but notice the very names: **i**Phone, **M**y space, **S**elfie. What’s it really about? Philippians 2:3 reads, “Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself.” If we are on “our” phone, in “our” space, or taking a “selfie”, is it really about building up others, or self? Is a friend on Facebook necessarily your friend? Will you ever really meet all of them? Would he or she lay down his or her life for you? Are we living for “likes”, but really just longing for love? Pastor Bobby also pointed out that God could have just sent a message to us about His love, but He didn’t. Jesus was selfless, so He came in person. Pastor Bobby said, “Social media gives the illusion of companionship without the demands of friendship.” Discuss how this can be true.

Pastor Bobby gave some good advice, “Never deal with conflict through text or email.” Have you ever been tempted to do this?

Why is it so tempting to deal with conflict like this?

Why is it such a bad practice?

Takeaway # 3 – Google or God

Pastor Bobby asked an extremely convicting question, “Do you spend as much time searching for God as you do searching Google?” Google has a lot of information, but God knows everything. John 16:13 says this of the Holy Spirit, “whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come.” Google can’t predict the future as only God can.

When we budget our time in technology, wouldn’t it be wise to replace that time, not only with our loved ones, but with the One who loves us the most? As Pastor Bobby put it, “May I suggest you take a rest from Facebook and get your face in TheBook.”

Would you be surprised to know that when you spend quality time in prayer and relationship with the true and living God, that He is much more interesting and personally informative than Google? If you’ve never been there, now may be the time to press in to it.

Pastor Bobby shared some important research from a Princeton University study, which showed that when two people interact linguistically, the brain actually shows some measurable synchronization. Jesus said in John 10:27, “My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me.”

How exciting is the prospect that we can be synchronized with God’s very essence by hearing His voice personally? What do you think of this idea? Is it possible? If so, isn’t it irresistible, and worth exchanging some screen time for God time?

Conclusion – Intentional Relationships

One of the videos we saw today showed a group of men who were in a room when the screens went dark. They decided to go with each other get something to eat. Hebrews 10:24-25 commands us, “And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together.”

On Thanksgiving Day perhaps many people will engage in real conversations across the table. What specific steps can you take to make intentional relationships with people in person, even if it means limiting time on the screen?

Could one of them be getting involved in a Connect Group at Life Church this January?