

Study Guide – Screenagers # 1, from 11-5-2017

Warming Up

Share some examples that you have observed in which a driver was texting, and traffic was impeded or endangered as a result of the texting. Does this irritate you, or are you the one texting? Share.

Takeaway # 1 - Moderation

“Is my moderation the same as yours?” Do you think people’s opinions differ in defining the line of “moderation” when it comes to technology? If people do define moderation differently, do you think that the difference is based on age, gender, geographic location, or something else? Give some examples of when the use of technology is no longer in moderation.

The Bible, in 1 Corinthians 6:12, addresses the subject of “moderation.” “All things are lawful (permissible, allowable) for me, but all things are not helpful. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any.” When Paul says that all things are permissible, he does not mean that crimes and sins are acceptable. He is implying that many things may be acceptable, but their practice is not beneficial. One part of this idea is that some practices may be done excessively, making them unhelpful. What are some examples of actions that are normal in their use, but the excessive practice of them causes harm?

The second part of this verse reads, “All things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any.” Discuss the thought that something that is allowable can take you into its power. How can you become addicted to something that is not addictive to someone who does it in moderation? What are the attractions that lead to this bondage? What can be done to avoid going too far?

Philippians 4:5 also addresses moderation. “Let your gentleness (moderation, patience) be known to all men. The Lord is at hand.” Have you ever observed someone who is drunk? That is an example of the person’s moderation not being known to men. In fact, it is their lack of moderation that is being known to others. Discuss and list some real life examples in which a person’s lack of moderation regarding technology is being known to those who see them or who try to have a conversation with them.

Pastor Bobby shared many medical statements that show that removing someone from technology which had become excessive is akin to making a drug addict or drunkard go “cold turkey.” We know that drugs and alcohol affect the blood stream and other parts of the body. So, if withdrawal is the same for excessive technology, isn’t that proof that the stimuli from technology actually changes something the body (brain)? Does this evidence of brain changes surprise you? Does it frighten you as you consider loved ones who may be using technology excessively?

Takeaway # 2 - The Damage

When addressing the damage technology causes to gray matter in the brain, white matter, and the frontal lobe, Pastor Bobby read this statement from the scientific studies, “Much of the damage occurs in the brain’s frontal lobe, which undergoes massive changes from puberty until the mid-twenties.” It is a well-known fact that many young adults in this generation are refusing to leave the nest by continuing to live with their parents. Could this practice coincide with this time in history being the “age of technology”? Can this phenomenon also be related to some of the other symptoms mentioned by Dr. Dunkey, such as, difficulty in emotional processing and decision making?

Pastor Bobby contrasted how children entertained themselves several decades ago with those who are occupied mainly by technology. The children of the pre-technology age played with other children, often outside, ran around, interacted, and burned a lot of physical energy. Children who are entertained primarily by technology may be physically inactive and socially isolated. Evidence of the damage of this was well covered in the message. And, while social media is social, it lacks physical eye to eye contact with the other person. Even video chatting is only interacting with the image of the other person. Do the trends with inactive children and isolated adults bother you? “Are the machines taking over?!!!” Discuss.

Takeaway # 3 - Out of Balance – “Where’s Your Treasure?”

Jesus made this convicting statement in Matthew 6:21, “For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” Give some examples of what Pastor Bobby meant when he said each of these phrases: “It’s okay for a device to bring us pleasure. It should never be our treasure.” “A device becomes wrong when we belong to it, instead of it belonging to us.” “Devices can become an idol and they can make us idle.”

TIME is what judges what your treasure is. If we dedicate more time to technology than to God (prayer, Bible meditation, interacting with other Christians), where are we building our treasure? Technology may be the latest fad, but it is not eternal. Where is your treasure? Where is the treasure of your children? Can the busyness and seduction that this technological world demands be justified?

“Be still, and know that I am God.” Psalm 46:10