



Welcome!

For the next thirty days, I am inviting you to detox from your smartphone.

Up until a few years ago, I had a pretty good handle on technology and particularly, my phone. Two years of lockdown in the Covid-19 pandemic certainly didn't help, but other forces have combined to make me feel like I am losing the battle. Can you relate?

This won't be easy.

Making a radical change is never easy, and we need to remember that at the end of the day, "*It's not you--it's your phone*" that's the true problem. This quote from Catherine Price in her book, "How to Break Up With Your Phone" is a reminder of how a few dozen, talented engineers in Silicon Valley control billions of people through their exploitation of dopamine and brain chemistry.

There is some very good news, however. One, you will gain so much more than what you put down in these thirty days. You will experience some, many, or all of these benefits: better sleep, less anxiety, higher quality conversations, more clarity, more peace, more productivity, better physical health, and more time to invest in any direction you choose. I hope and pray that part of that time will be invested by joyfully sitting at the feet of Jesus.

Secondly, you aren't alone. Researchers on habits and change tell us often that people who do hard things in community are much more likely to enjoy the challenge--as well as see much greater benefits than those who go it alone. This is why A.A. and churches with intentional community see exponential transformation compared to individuals.

Finally, the true goal isn't just to detox from our phones and technology. The

true goal is to reposition your heart, your soul, and your life to what truly matters. In the last week of our time together, you will be challenged to make a “Rule of Life” for your smartphone and technology. Before re-entering, we want you to be clear and intentional about the kind of life and habits that are worthy of your time as a follower of Jesus, and the way that you show up for others around you.

Praying for you and cheering you on,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chris McGregor". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent initial "C" and "M".

Pastor Chris McGregor

INSTRUCTIONS

“Turn my eyes from looking at worthless things and give me life in your ways.”

--Psalm 119:37

Option 1: Full Digital Fast*

- Make your smartphone dumb. Move anything off your phone that you can do on your computer or laptop. This will create more resistance to using these apps.
- Divide your apps into two categories: utility and distraction. Delete the distraction apps off your phone.

Utility: Maps, calculator, phone, texting, FaceTime, calendar, camera, notes, home/garage remote access, music, weather.

Distraction: Social Media (including TikTok, Instagram, Snapchat, Facebook, YouTube, Netflix, TV, X/Twitter) All Games, News, e-Mail, Amazon & other Shopping Apps. Strongly consider removing your internet browser so you can't bypass these apps with it.

Ask yourself this final question, *“Is this app useful for productivity and safety, or is it primarily distracting me?”*

- Eliminate all other screens for personal use and enjoyment which would include TV, Netflix and other Streaming Services, and Gaming Devices.
- Limit digital technology to work apps during work hours only, only on your work devices. (ie. desktop or laptop) Commit to no work outside of your normal work schedule such as answering e-mails, etc. This will require a conversation with your boss and team. Explain to them that this will not only improve your mental health, but will improve the quality of your work productivity as you will show up with renewed focus during work hours.

Option 2: Moderated Digital Fast

- Same as number 1 and 2 above, make your smartphone dumb, only leaving utility apps on your smartphone.
- Fast from entertainment on screens for a specific number of days during the week. For example, determine that you will fast from watching TV or play video games during the weekdays, but you will allow yourself 2 hours on the weekends only.
- Limit digital technology to work apps, during work hours, only on your work devices. Commit to fasting from work after your normal shift is finished, and don't complete any work until your next morning of focused work. Again, have a conversation with your boss and work team, asking for permission after explaining why this will help your mental health, and overall productivity during work hours.

Timeline

We will start together on **Monday, January 26th** and conclude our 30 days of digital fasting on **February 24th**.

We will have messages on Sundays within City Church, and will provide some texts and emails along the way to inspire, challenge, and give you more food for thought.

January 26 - February 24, 2026

*Note: These instructions are adapted from Dr. Darren Whitehead's excellent resource,
The Digital Fast

Resources

Netflix (watch before Monday, January 26th)

Watch “ **The Social Dilemma**” which is a documentary that interviews technology engineers who helped build some of the largest social media companies in the world. It is very well done and will provide a great discussion for you and your roommates, or family.

Podcasts

The Case for a Digital Asceticism | Unhurrying with a Rule of Life: Episode 3 by John Mark Comer Teachings

Raising Boys & Girls Podcast | Episode 58 with Jenny Black “*How to Cultivate a Healthy Relationship with Technology*”

Rule of Life Podcast: Luminary Interview with Andy Crouch.

Books

How to Break Up with Your Phone by Catherine Price

Restless Devices by Felicia Wu Song

The Tech-Wise Family by Andy Crouch

My Tech-Wise Life by Amy and Andy Crouch

The Digital Fast by Dr. Darren Whitehead

The Anxious Generation by Jonathan Haidt

Digital Minimalism by Cal Newport

Dopamine Nation by Anna Lembke

How To Prepare for The Digital Fast

- Talk to your family or roommates about your desire to spend 30 days on a digital fast. Tell them why you are doing it, and what the fast entails. Ask for their support, and invite them to join in.
- Talk to your boss and/or work colleagues. Explain the big picture of mental health and creating healthier habits, and ask for their support. Ask for permission to not respond to work responsibilities after your normal shift is finished. If there is a work emergency, come up with a workable plan that will satisfy your colleagues as well as your desire to lean in to the fast. talk to your work colleagues.
- Find a supportive group within City Church with whom you can share this 30 day experience. Try to get at least two others to join you! Create a way to encourage each other with phone calls, or meeting up for walks.
- Put an out-of-the-office assistant on for your e-mail, letting them know you will not be checking e-mail after work hours until the next morning.
- Place a message on social media letting people know of your intention to spend 30 days off social media. For close friends and family, make sure they have your phone number if they need to reach you.
- Download your favourite podcasts and music to have it ready to replace doomscrolling on social media.
- Buy an alarm clock so that you can leave your phone in a room outside your bedroom. This is a universal hack that nearly everyone recommends.
- Buy or take out a few good books at the library. This is your time to read some entertaining fiction, dive into history, or chip away at learning a new language. (take a look at the resources on the previous page if you want to learn more about digital techno
- Sign-up for a dance class, pottery class, or exercise class. Fill your newly-free schedule with social activities that will improve your physical, emotional and relational health.

- Grab a paper journal to jot down your feelings, thoughts and experiences throughout the next few weeks.
- Pull out, or buy a few card or board games to replace individual phone time with games around your home.
- Do your best to create rhythms of eating around your table together at dinnertime. Talk about your day, talk about what you're noticing, what's difficult, and what's been an unexpected benefit.
- Expect discomfort in the first forty-eight hours especially. While you may not physically twitch, this will be a big change for many of us. Give yourself grace, and instead of judging yourself, notice the impulse you have. Why do you want it? What are you really looking for? What's going on inside me that makes me want to do that?
- Reset when you mess up. This is not an all-or-nothing situation. If you go back to old habits intentionally or even unintentionally, be curious about that, and go back to the fast. Think about all the victories you have already had, instead of focusing on a failure.
- Be kind and gracious to others. No one likes to be guilted or crushed by harsh words. If you happen to find it easy, don't lord it over others, but try to help them instead. Instead of harsh judgment, be curious about what's going on inside them, invite them to talk about it, and invite them to get back to the fast.

My Why

Simon Sinek in his book, *Start with Why*, says that our sense of purpose, whether personally or professionally, is the key to our success.

The “why”, followed by the “how” and the “what” are the three steps to achieving personal satisfaction, as well as being a great leader and growing a successful company.

Why do you want to participate in this thirty day fast? Be specific about what you hope to see happen in these thirty days, and the new lifestyle that you would love to see starting on day thirty-one.

Another way to think about this is, what’s at stake for your mind, your heart, and your soul if you are able to break this addiction and form new, healthier habits? What’s at stake with your relationship with God, with your family, friends and your church? What’s at stake for your mental health and your physical health? What’s at stake for your kids and spouse?

Spend ten minutes jotting down your why so that when this challenge gets difficult, you can go back to this vision for your life. Feel free to use these or other categories to articulate your purpose.

Mental Health

Physical Health

Relationship Health with Family or Friends

Spiritual Health

My Career Aspirations

My Hobbies

My True Passions

My why is....

Final Words

We are excited to join you over these next thirty days.

Save this document on your laptop or computer if possible so that you aren't tempted to use your phone more.

Look out for e-mails and texts from us at 514-700-4885. If you haven't currently subscribed, text the word "digital-fast" to this number and we will send you some encouragement, questions, and motivation along the way.

Also, check out free resources like this on our City Church Canada App. You will find our Sunday messages, as well as other ways to keep you motivated and growth-oriented between now and February 24th.

Remember to be gracious and curious instead of judgmental. Many of us have been regularly spending hours a day on our phones, so this will feel unnatural at the beginning.

When you do feel tempted to grab your phone, be curious about what's going inside you. Are you sad, lonely, angry, hungry, bored, or something else? Once we get into the habit of actually noticing our feelings, we will be in a much healthier place to adjust our habits.

If you are follower of Jesus, remember that Jesus promised to "*never leave you, nor forsake you.*" He is so happy to join you in this digital fast, knowing that one of the most important reasons you are doing this is to create more space for him to speak to you.

Are you ready?

Let's do this!