



# Wise Use of Technology

COTR Sunday school

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*Epiphany, 2020*



# The Importance of the Medium

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- ❖ Nehemiah 8
- ❖ Niel Postman's comparison of the Lincoln-Douglas debates and a 1983 ABC discourse
  - ❖ Lincoln-Douglas debates
    - ❖ Douglas: 1 hour
    - ❖ Lincoln: 1.5 hour reply
    - ❖ Douglas: 0.5 reply
    - ❖ A previous debate had Douglas for 3, then a break for supper, Lincoln for 3, and a rebuttal from Douglas (about 7 hours!)



# The Importance of the Medium

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- ❖ 1983 ABC discourse after the controversial movie *The Day After*
  - ❖ 80 minutes total
  - ❖ Six panelists: Henry Kissinger, Robert McNamara, Elie Wiesel, Carl Sagan, William Buckley, General Brent Scowcroft
  - ❖ Each panelist was given 5 min, there was no clear schedule of debate, little interaction and interrogation of points made or assumptions used.
  - ❖ Each “speech” was more of a performance in front of the millions watching rather than reasoned, careful exposition of a position



# So, what changed?

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- ❖ Television!
- ❖ Television brought time constraints and an emphasis on the show rather than the substance of the issue.
- ❖ So, what are the effects of the change in medium?
- ❖ And, just think; the bulk of our political dialogue takes place on twitter. 160 characters written in private for the whole world to see.
- ❖ What is the effect of instant news?



# Hearing ourselves to Death

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- ❖ Think about how you listened to music before the phonograph.
  - ❖ It was intentional act and therefore a much more remembered and appreciated experience.
- ❖ And, now we are surrounded by music. It is at the tips of our fingers. It plays all over the place, in our homes, on TV, in movies, in the car, in the store, in the elevator.
  - ❖ It has become white noise rather than the experience of beauty
  - ❖ What are the effects of this?



# Two Military Examples

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- ❖ WWII Germans vs. 21st Americans
- ❖ Americans and British



# How Then Shall we Live

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- ❖ First, simply be aware of the effects of the media that we use. Think about them. Be thoughtful and critical.
- ❖ Secondly, intentionally fast from immediacy, from time to time.
  - ❖ Turn off your playlist. Go home. Put the kids to bed and intentionally listen to a piece of music. And, then maybe discuss it with someone.
  - ❖ Take a break from the news and read some political theory.
  - ❖ Have a long conversation with someone, where points are made, countered, and reconsidered—and do it in person.