

Trust and Love in a Digital World – Part 4

1 Corinthians 10:31; Coast Pastor's Class; Earl Miles July 2, 2017
Adapted from *12 Ways Your Phone is Changing You* by Tony Reinke

Introduction

1. Technology is good and we should be thankful for it.
2. As sinners, we can turn a good thing into a bad thing.
3. Therefore, we must evaluate our use/abuse of technology.
 - Problem of Distraction (being drawn away): Is it a distraction that keeps us from our responsibilities and spiritual pursuits?
 - Problem of People Neglect (distancing ourselves from those closest to us): Does it cause us to neglect/harm people, especially those who are right around us?
 - Problem of Man's Approval (seeking glory / 'likes'): Are we seeking to gain the approval/glorification of man through our online lives?
 - Problem of Aliteracy (not reading what matters): Are we becoming bored without constant entertainment and decreasing our ability to read and focus sustained attention on the challenging but eternally profitable things (ie, the Bible, nonfiction books on Christian doctrine and living)?

The Problem of Prosumerism

What is the effect of our 'producing' on ourselves and others?

Social media is driven by the desire to be, not only consumers, but producers (or actors) who produce our own online, visual, narrated autobiography, often without the purpose of exalting God through natural and special revelation and the grace of God in people's lives.

'My' worship (what I love) drives social media. Technology has given us a tool to exalt what we worship.

1. We have gone from consumers to consumers and producers = prosumers. This is the effect of the medium – how it has changed us not just the messages on the medium.
2. Our smartphone cameras have turned us into actors and producers who have the choice of watching, watching and capturing or just capturing.
3. The effort to capture the moment can rob us of truly enjoying the moment.
4. We must learn to enjoy the moment without being compelled to capture it and to escape the intermediated world of the produced and step away to live our own lives.
5. If we do choose to capture the moment, we need to realize that everything is created and shared (edited and produced) with a purpose: often, to exalt what I love.
6. Exalting what we love through producing online can either move us and others toward 'immortal horrors or everlasting splendors.'

7. We should use creation and the display of it for the glory of God, the good of others and the progress of the gospel.
8. We are being conditioned to turn to our phones when we want to be amazed and wowed.
9. We should not suppress our soul's appetite for what is awe-inspiring but seek to see God's glory in Scripture, in nature and the grace of God in people's lives reflected in the work of skilled online producers of art.
10. In magnifying the gifts through our productions, we want to magnify the Giver not obscure Him.

Exodus 32:1-6; James 1:17; 1 Timothy 6:17

The Problem of Techno-Idolatry

What is the effect of our 'consuming' on us?

Social media often is about portraying an image which is driven by what we worship and leads others to worship us and/or what we worship through identification and imitation.

'Me' worship (love of me) drives social media. Technology has given me a tool to exalt 'me.'

1. New technologies encourage us to capture our reflection on our phones for us and others to gaze at. (digital narcissism)
2. But we don't gain our identity in ourselves so we have to identify with others and seek to be like them (imitation).
3. Celebrities and athletes and others represent the glory we want to possess for ourselves.
4. Identifying with others and imitating them and desiring the glory they share is the language of worship.
5. New technologies are tools by which we can exalt ourselves as we identify with and imitate others.
6. As a result, we begin to submit our human and spiritual goals to our phone and all its possibilities (reverse adaptation).
7. Our phones become an idol as we seek the glory of 'me.'
8. But we were made to 'image' God by magnifying His character and value; to be satisfied in God and show it.
9. We will become like what we worship.
10. If we pursue the glory of 'me' by identifying with and imitating the empty glory of others instead of pursuing the all-satisfying glory of God, we will only get the emptiness of others.

Isaiah 14:12-15; Philippians 2:3-11

Must be careful of:

Producing 'my' worship that excludes God.

Exalting 'me' worship that replaces God.