

- ***READ Ecclesiastes 1:1-11*** I'm sure that I am not the only person who has ever paused and thought to myself, "How did anyone ever survive in life without air conditioning during the summer months in Jackson, Tennessee??" Or maybe we've all thought, "How did anyone ever get anywhere without a car, truck, or SUV?" "How did anyone survive without running water?" "How did anyone keep up with the lives of others without social media?" "How could anyone ever properly raise a child without the ability to have order diapers and have them delivered by drone to your house within five minutes when you run out?"
- The last question might be a little bit of an exaggeration, but I think we are getting the point. How did anyone live in this world without the modern means of convenience that is afforded to us through the technology that is available to us today. We, more than any other generation before us, are surrounded on every side by some sort of technology that aids us in living this life. We sit here even this evening with that very much appreciated air conditioning that is allowing us to be comfortable. We just finished singing together with the aid of words projected on a wall from a computer. Some of us are even holding the Word of God in electronic form in our hands at his very moment! What a time to be alive!
- Yet, we would do well to pause from time to time and consider our lives in this technological age. We would do well to consider our lives as Christians and how we use the vast amounts of technology that are available to us today. We would do well to consider the type of impact that it is capable of having on our lives. And of course we would do well to consider all of these things from the perspective of the Word of God. I hope that you have a Bible with you, and that you will follow along as we consider four important things to remember as we live our lives in this technological age.

4 Things To Remember In Our Technological Age

I. There is truly nothing new under the sun.

- A. Solomon was the wisest of men who understood that this life is vastly the same for all who live it.
1. Those questions that I asked at the onset of this discussion obviously have a bit of humor within them, but at the same time these are questions that we might legitimately be asking ourselves when we compare our way of living to the lives of generations before us.
 2. While we might think that we are just now coming into the age of technology, the truth is that this simply isn't the case if we understand technology as being more than the simple use of electricity. Technology as defined by Merriam-Webster as *"the practical application of knowledge."* We might more understand technology as being anything from the human mind that provides the ability to accomplish the tasks of this life. Men have always been giving great effort to live this life with more ease and ability...and yet Solomon says that in the end everything is vanity...that everything stays the same and doesn't changes...life goes on.
 3. Here in **Ecclesiastes 1:1-11**, we read of Solomon's basic understanding of life and these are the bare bones of life...**"A generation goes and a generation comes, but the earth remains forever." (Ecclesiastes 1:4)** The earth continues on its natural cycles regardless of man's influence upon them. The sun, wind, and water will continue to cycle and the earth will continue to go on as generations come and generations go. There is truly nothing new under the sun, and this remains true even when we consider technology because technology has been present since nearly the beginning of mankind. Men have always done as much as they can to take advantage of their knowledge of this life in order to make it a bit easier to manage.
- B. Men have used their knowledge to create technology since nearly the beginning.
1. Technological innovations can be found all throughout the Old Testament. The ark itself could be seen as a piece of technology. **(Genesis 6)** The tower of Babel and the tools used to build

that structure could easily be considered technology. **(Genesis 11)** I think also about the grain storage system that Joseph contrived for the years of famine that he predicted that would come through the land. **(Genesis 41)** Maybe no greater symbol of technological innovation could be seen than the temple and its construction. **(I Kings 6)**

2. While none of these things used or were constructed with electricity, they no less qualify as technology or technological innovation. They might not be as advanced as what we have today, but we must consider that to these people they were truly great leaps in what was available at their time of living. They, like we, had to know how to use the technology that was available to them, and that began for them and begins for us by understanding the nature of technology from a moral perspective.

II. Technology itself is neither good or evil...it all comes down to how it is used.

A. If not careful, we can allow ourselves to fall into extreme positions in regard to the use of technology.

1. There is often a division that is present between past generations and modern generations concerning the embracing of technology. Sometime what we see from the older generations is this immediate hesitation or even refusal to use newer technology simply because it is new. How many older people do we know who have refused to get cell phones, home computers, other like things? They might be thinking that they survived for how every many years without them, and they don't need to start using them now simply for pride's sake. They even see technology itself as being something that is inherently bad because of how it changes how we live life at times.
2. On the other end of the spectrum there some of the younger generations who are willing to accept and use any sort of technology no matter what it is or what it will do simply because it is new technology. The rise of technological innovation certainly leads to generations that are fascinated with technology and are ever ready to embrace and use it. They see all advances and uses of technology as being good.
3. I'm sure each of us have run into people who would fall into one or the other of these groups. Older people who are set in their ways of doing things, and young people who are looking for that next big technological breakthrough that will signal the change of life itself. While there is nothing wrong with not using or using technology, we would do well to remember that the vast majority of technology and innovations are neither good nor bad within themselves.

B. The appropriate approach to technology would be to remember that it truly comes down to how we use the technologies that are available to us in our age.

1. While we might be able to think of some technology that has been created for the sole purpose of be able to do that which is evil and against the will of God, the majority of technological advances fall under the umbrella of being either good or bad based upon how they are used, and we could see that even from the technology that we have noted earlier.
2. The ark in and of itself was just a boat, but it could have been used to either please God or displease Him. God was going to be pleased with Noah putting on the ark whom God had said should be on it, but Noah could've used it to load up whomever he wanted against God's wishes. The temple was a marvelous structure, but God was highly displeased when His house was used by the people for prostitution and weaving hangings for the Asherah. **(II Kings 23:7)**
3. These same principles apply to the technology that is available to us. There is nothing wrong with devices such as our phones and computers, and they can actually be of great aid to us in many different ways! However, God most certainly is displeased when we use these things to sin against Him in different ways. The conveniences that are afforded to us by different technologies and innovations make life easier, but they can also serve as great distractions from the more important aspects of life. We must use wisdom in our approach and use of technology.

III. Technology can influence how we interact with others.

A. While created for convenience, technology can also create some difficulties in life.

1. So much of the technology that we use in our time can be found contained within the phones and devices that the vast majority are in possession of. We hold more power in these small devices than entire generation possessed in times past. With this power comes the ability to do things in ways that were not possible in times past. Again, what a time to be alive when we are able to conduct business transactions, speak with family members who are hours away, and do any number of other amazing things.
2. However, as much as these devices create awesome avenues of convenience...we must also acknowledge that these devices can be very addicting. There is no shortage of studies that show the impact that screen time can have on young children, and those studies could show the same impact on people even my age and older.
3. What we have developing all around us are people who are becoming more and more incapable of interacting with other people around them because they spend so much time with their heads looking down at a screen. Instead of having face to face conversations, nearly all communication takes place through text, email, or social media. When the time comes to interact with other sin person...well...there are becoming more and more people who are incapable to doing such a thing because the vast majority of their time is used looking at a screen. These same people might even feel as if they could not function without the presence or ability to use technology. When this becomes our reality, then we must recognize that some changes need to take place.

B. We cannot allow for technology to distort the basic foundations of this life.

1. This life is built upon human interactions and relationships, and if we have our faces always looking down at our phones or other devices then we are missing out on many of God's greatest blessings. I'm sure we have all seen the sight, and sadly I'd have to admit that I have been that person who is out to eat with the family and instead of interacting with them, minutes and minutes go by with noses firmly planted in handheld devices.
2. I am all for the use of technology in many different ways, but I am much more so for the God-given blessing of human interaction, especially with my family, friends, and fellow disciples. God didn't create us to be screen watchers! He created us to love and interact with those around us. This is most especially true when it comes to our spiritual families.
3. All throughout the book of Acts, we see disciples who spent a lot of time together enjoying the fruits of their fellowship in Jesus Christ. **Acts 2:42-47** paints a beautiful picture of disciples who spent so much time face to face with one another, but I wonder if this text would read the same way if it were written in modern times. Would it be written of us that we are continually devoting ourselves to the Apostles' teaching, fellowship, and breaking bread from house to house? Or are we too busy because of the modern conveniences that are available to us? When we are together, are we making the best of our time or are we too focused on our phones and not the souls who are all around us. These are the types of questions that we must ask ourselves when we consider how we are living our lives in this age of such great technology, and it should lead us all to an all important and common conclusion.

IV. We must discipline ourselves to properly use the technology available to us.

A. Our purpose in all things should be the glorification of God.

1. This is the point of the text that we read together at the beginning of our assembly. **(II Corinthians 10:23-33)** The Apostle Paul states in this text that there are so many things that are available to us in this life that are not unlawful within themselves, but some of these things might not be all that profitable for us to be engaged in doing. Our focus should be on the

benefit that can be had towards our neighbors, and most importantly our focus should be on doing anything and everything to the glory of God. (**II Corinthians 10:31**)

2. Paul says later on in **Colossians 3:17** Paul states, *“Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father.”* In whatever it is that we are doing in this life, we must be able to stop and give God thanks for the ability to do that particular thing. If we cannot see ourselves doing such a thing then it might be that we don't need to be doing whatever it is that we are doing. The principles found in these verses are just as applicable to our usage of technology as anything else.

B. This means that we must give diligent effort to discipline ourselves so that our use of technology will only result in the glorification of God.

1. If everything we do must be done to the glory of God then it is necessary that we discipline ourselves to be able to do only those things in this life. Paul says in **I Corinthians 9:27** that he disciplined his body and made it his slave so that he himself might not be disqualified from the race of life that he was running from being overtaken by any sort of sin. Are we doing the same thing in our lives? Have we made a determination to live disciplined lives.
2. I'm sure many of us have done that very thing in many different areas of life, and that might be a result of things that we used to participate in that were not becoming of a disciple of Jesus Christ. May God continue to bless us in those efforts, and may he help us to remember that this same discipline is necessary when it comes to our interaction and usage with technology. There are so many things that can make this life easier, and there are also things that we can use that help to take our minds off of many of life's difficulties.
3. However, we must not allow for ourselves to become so dependent or addicted to any sort of technology that it becomes our master or leads us into temptation and sin. If we ever find ourselves in that place then we must put into practice what we see in **Matthew 5:29,30**. We must put that thing far away from us because our souls are worth far more than any sort of convenience that might be found in that technology. Discipline is a must in all parts of life, and that remains just as true in our usage of technology.

In 2018, it can be nearly impossible if not actually impossible to live a life without the usage of some sort of technology. As we have discussed this evening, this demands that we approach the use of such technology with the appropriate mindset and attitude. We should be thankful to God for the many modern conveniences that we enjoy, but we shouldn't allow for these blessings to be turned into something that dishonors or displeases God. May we ever be mindful and aware as we daily use the technologies that are available to us, and may everything that we do bring glory and honor to the name of our great and awesome God.

PRAYER *Our Father in heaven...we come before you with thankful hearts recognizing that we are so blessed to live in the time in which we do. We are so incredibly blessed to have the many conveniences of our day, and we give You thanks for such blessings. We ask that You would help for us to use such blessings only in ways that bring You glory. Help us to never become overly dependent on such things, and may we discipline ourselves to use them well each day. Please bless us as we go throughout this week. Help us to shine our lights so that others will see You in us. Whether we use technology or don't, help us to do so to Your glory alone. We love You Father, and we ask these things in the name of Your Son Jesus the Christ...amen.*