A FAMILY TECHNOLOGY PLAN

Technology: Be Intentional

Proverbs 29:18 "Where there is no vision, the people perish: but he that keepeth the law, happy is he."

Technology can be used for many different purposes, and there are many different ways to access technology. Being intentional about how you and your family will approach the topic of technology can help ensure technology is seen with a proper perspective. This article is meant to help with this intentionality and point toward some resources in this area. It is not meant to be exhaustive in nature, but it is meant to give guidance and begin the discussion for families and individuals.

Technology is neither good nor evil-it is a tool that can be used for both. It is important to recognize the different uses of technology, from typing a school paper to reading an e-book to keeping up with social media to viewing inappropriate material. It is helpful to identify ways technology can be used for evil and engage in ways to teach and protect against those things in your home. It can also be helpful to identify ways technology can be used for good and allow for the proper stewardship of technology.

Some beginning questions to consider as a family:

- What aspects of technology do we consider good, evil, and morally neutral?

- How much of your child's day do you want him/her interacting with technology?
  - How much time will your child need to spend interacting with technology to complete necessary tasks? (i.e. school work)
  - How much time do you want technology to be used for pleasure or relaxation? (i.e. learning about trivial things, engaging social media, reading/listening to/watching things they are interested in)

Training Your Child:

Deuteronomy 6:4-9 "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord: And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates."

A consistent thread throughout Scripture is that God uses challenges and experiences to train his children. Parenting is both a joy and a challenging journey. One of the aspects of parenting that makes the journey both full of joy and full of challenge is navigating the shift from a helpless infant to a person who has their own thoughts, beliefs, and ability to engage those thoughts and beliefs. Through this journey the parent is encouraged to *"train up a child"* *(Proverbs 22:6)* so the child is able to know and follow God's commandments as they get older. This journey is often full of disagreements between the parent and child about how much freedom vs. parental oversight is needed. The child often feels more confident to engage in choices and challenges than they should, and often the parent has difficulty giving additional freedoms to a child who is still growing and maturing. Technology can be a battleground for parents and children. It is a venue by which the contents of the heart of a child can be revealed, whether good or evil (see *Matthew 15:17-19)*. This insight into their heart can provide tremendous teaching moments. It also lays out why it is so important to start engaging this topic while your child is young and continue to see the topic as an opportunity to train your child in truth throughout their life.

Some further ideas for parents to consider in regards to technology:

- How will you train your child to think about technology?

- How will you teach your child to avoid evil, engage good, and develop self-control?
- Communication and modeling are two significant aspects of training and teaching.
  - How, when, and with what frequency will you communicate with your child concerning the topic of technology?
  - What and how will you model what you desire to grow in your child? (consider the teaching above in *Deuteronomy 6:4-9*)

Questions to Consider When Developing a Technology Plan:
As you begin to craft a technology plan for yourself and/or your family, there are several key questions to consider. Some of these questions are very practical while others are more directional in nature. Your answers to these principled questions will begin to shape what type of technology environment is present in your home.

Teach:
- Are you using technology as an opportunity to teach proactive principles?
  - Ex. – are you teaching the difference between the "accidental exposure" to inappropriate content vs the "intentional pursuit"?
- How will you use technology to build relationship and as a springboard for discussion?

Engage:
- How much time each week would you like your entire family to be together? What do you want this time to look like?
- What are the ages of your children in your home? How many and what type of devices do you have in your home which connect to media?
- When and where will access be allowed? Who will be accessing technology with them (parent, friends, alone) and what determines which is appropriate?

Learn:
- What resources do you need in order to make good decisions?
- When and how will you review your plan in order to see if changes need to be made?

Protect:
- Do you have appropriate boundaries on all of your devices?
- How will you allow greater access to technology but also maintain the ability to monitor and protect your family? When does a child "earn" greater access?

While the above article gives an initial understanding of technology in the home, there is much more to consider when creating a plan for your family. The complete *Family Technology Plan* resource is available on the technology portion of our website. There you will also find other resources which can help as we seek to apply God's principles to this important area today.

Key resources (www.accounseling.org/technology):
- *Breaking Bread Podcast Technology Episodes*
- *Internet Filtering/Monitoring Quick Reference*
- *Technology Teaching Principles Discussion Aids*
- *Technology Principles*
- *Guidance on Using Technology*