

Cell Phones and the Cyber World

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Technology-based systems and the cyber world of the Internet, including AI (artificial intelligence) dominate our 21st century society. Smartphones, Smart TVs (I have a Roku), and other social media advancements are a major part of our lives. While these technology innovations are not bad in and of themselves and have useful purposes, they can

have a negative influence on our lives if our use of them is not guided by Biblical principles (Ps. 119:11) and the Holy Spirit (Gal. 5:25). The cyber world can instigate or incite worldliness and carnality in the lives of God's children. The old adage is still true. We are to be IN the world, but not OF the world (Rom. 12:2). We could update this saying and also conclude we can be ON the Internet but not IN the sinful elements of the Internet. We need to remember this when using our cell phones and all modern technology that gives us access to the Internet.

The hymn "Am I a Soldier of the Cross" asks:

"Are there no foes for me to face?
Must I not stem the flood?
Is this vile world a friend to grace,
To help me on to God?"

The answer is obvious. No! The dark side of the cyber world wants to take us down and defeat our lives as Christians. As discerning Christians, we must have "understanding of the times" (1 Chr. 12:32) and learn how to use the good of modern technology without being overcome by the bad. In other words, we must learn to not use the Internet for worldly and carnal purposes but to use it in only God-glorifying ways (1 Cor. 10:31).

Today we need to take on technology from a Biblical perspective for the Bible is the blueprint for Christian living. **“All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine** (it teaches or instructs us), **for reproof** (it convicts us), **for correction** (it reveals to us our wrong decisions and directions), **for instruction in righteousness** (shows us how to do right and honor God): **That the man of God may be perfect** (spiritual complete, proficient, and mature), **thoroughly furnished** (fully or adequately equipped) **unto all good works.”**

It’s generally agreed that the average American spends 4 hours a day on their cellphone alone. This does not include time watching television or being on the computer. Children now spend an average of 9 hours a day in front of a media screen between phones, TV, computers, and video games. Many have become “blogaholics” and have acquired different addictions through their web surfing and time spent on the Internet. We are living in the electronic age as we approach the end of the age!

What are the pluses and minuses related to using cell phones? Of course, cell phones can be used for God’s purposes and glory when researching spiritual truths from God’s Word via the Internet. I have devotional and Biblical studies at my fingertips on both my computer and cell phone. We can use modern web technologies (smartphones, computers, etc.) as tools for ministry interaction with other Christians, as a way to keep in contact and up to date with missionaries around the world, to share prayer requests and even the Gospel with others, and to provide help and encouragement to one another. But at the same time our cell phone can be used in a way that brings about our own spiritual defeat and demise. This will be our focus in this study.



I want to begin by confirming that I am not against the use of cell phones. Cell phones like computers and other advancements of modern technology such as AI (artificial intelligence) are amoral (nonsinful) in their make-up or design. In other words, there is nothing sinful about technology. To try and convey that using modern advancements in society is a form of worldliness is to be

misguided. Mostly anything can become worldly to us depending on how we use or abuse it.

The refusal to use modern advancements in society such as cars, cell phones, electric, computers, gas engines, or jewelry is a form of asceticism – not Biblical separation. Ascetic practices were popular during the Middle Ages. People would sleep on hard beds, whip themselves, not speak for days, and go without food or sleep. Somehow these people thought they were more spiritual and acceptable to God by these ascetic practices.

Asceticism or the depriving oneself of nonsinful things in life is based upon legalism which is when man tries to earn his own salvation and justification before God (Titus 3:5; Rom. 3:20, 26, 28). This is because those who deny themselves of certain comforts and the technological advancements within society (like cell phones) believe in the end that their self-denial and ascetic practices will give them approval and acceptance before God. The two (asceticism and legalism) are always linked together and become an outward expression of the way of human effort instead of the working of God's grace which brings a person into a justified (legally righteous) position before God (Gal. 2:16).

Colossians 2:20-21 condemns asceticism:

“Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ (*sharing in Christ's death and victory over sin through union with Him – Rom. 6:1-15*) from the rudiments of the world (the ABC's or principle elements of worldly living such as acetic legalism), **why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances** (man's decrees or commands), **(Touch not; taste not; handle not).**”

The Bible teaches that believers have been released from observing ritualistic observances (“rudiments of the world”) which are man-made legalistic and ascetic laws allegedly designed to produce sanctification (holiness) and salvation instead of a person's union with Christ's death (“if ye be dead with Christ”). In other words, in our death and identification with Christ we have become a victor over the deeds of the flesh (Romans 6:1-6). Therefore, we don't need to impose upon ourselves the fleshly deeds of legalism, ritualism, mysticism, asceticism or be “subject to ordinances” (manmade laws) in order to achieve sanctification (victory over the sin nature) or salvation (acceptance before God). Instead, God's

children should base salvation upon saving grace (Eph. 2:8-9) and sanctification in the Christian life upon the working of the strengthening and enabling grace of God in their hearts and lives for daily victory (Eph. 2:8-9; 2 Pet. 3:18; Rom. 6:14-15).

The purpose of ascetic laws (you cannot use cell phones or computers) allows a person to allegedly sanctify himself and in the end gain God's favor through good works. But the truth is this. No ascetic or legalistic human work can be added to the saving work of Christ's death. Only Christ's work on the cross can grant us acceptance before God (2 Cor. 5:21; 1 Pet. 2:24). In fact, only grace can save (Eph. 2:8-9) and sanctify us in our Christian life (Rom. 6:14-15). The legalistic commands of ascetism ("taste not; touch not; handle not") are a self-imposed religion which has no relationship to either sanctification or salvation.



In Lancaster County where I live the Amish religion is a form of asceticism. They still use horses and buggies for transportation. They believe electric is worldly and sinful and many will only use propane or natural gas. They till their fields with horse-drawn plows and refuse most modern

technology. Some of the old order Mennonites also use horses and buggies, but other branches of the Mennonites are a bit more modernized.

Some will have rubber on their tractor tires while others do not. Some are allowed by the bishops to have rubber only on their trailers which they pull from behind, but they are not allowed to have rubber tractor tires. Therefore, they have steel tires that tear up our roads!



Some more modernized Mennonites actually drive black cars (the color of sin?) claiming that other colors are worldly and not appropriate. All these are manmade “ordinances” (Col. 2:21) which revolve around the practice of asceticism and seeking to gain God’s approval through legalism. Is it wrong to have cars and trucks? Is it wrong to have rubber tires on your tractor? Of course not. And the same is true about using modern technology such as cell phones, computers, and such like.



I remember one ex-old-order Mennonite sharing with me how his church fought over whether or not the bishop could have a light bulb above the pulpit. He was getting older, and it was hard for him to see. So, there was a big ruckus over one lightbulb. Can you imagine fighting over a lightbulb? God has commanded us to fight for the truth (Jude 3; 2 Tim. 4:7) but not over lightbulbs. This is where manmade legalistic “ordinances” take people. Is it wrong to have light bulbs in your house? Absolutely not. The Bible does not say, “Thou shalt not have light.” Is it wrong to have a

cell phone and modern technology. No. The Bible does not say, “Thou shalt not have a cell phone.”

Asceticism arises out of sense of guilt before God because of sin and therefore people try to appease God by their ascetic practices. Even Martin Luther before discovering the truth of justification by faith alone nearly wrecked his health through asceticism.

I’ve said all of this to stress one point. We should not refuse to use cell phones or any other technological advancements on the basis of asceticism. Asceticism and legalism simply don’t work! They can’t produce sanctification or salvation. Only grace can save and change a person’s life (Rom. 6:14-15). Both ascetism and legalism are debunked systems when it comes to changing the lives of people (Romans 7:6-25).

I'm glad that we have cell phones today. When I was in college, I had a pay phone in my house dorm, and a person had to call collect or put all kinds of change in the phone to talk for three minutes. Personally, I'm glad those days are gone! Whoever said that living in the good old days were always good old days? Today we can use cell phones and computers (Internet) for ministry. Missionaries benefit greatly from these modern technologies.



The Bible concludes that we can use advanced technology such as cell phones, computers, and other media devices as long as we don't abuse them. The Bible speaks of **"they that use this world, as not abusing it"** (1 Cor. 7:31). This should be our approach when using our cell phones. This simply means we can use nonsinful things (like advanced technology) in this world as long as we don't misuse or abuse the technology and allow it to become a spiritual stumbling block in our lives and the lives of others. We can use the advancements of society as a greater way to serve God. In fact, when we are not married, we have even more opportunity and flexibility to use earthly things to help us serve God. This is what Paul is teaching in 1 Corinthians 7.

Of course, there is a word of warning for us at this point. We may use food, clothes, property, homes, commerce, politics, science, music, artistry, sports, and iPhones as part of our earthly routine in life, but they should not become a god to us, nor should they become a distraction to our spiritual life, growth, and true commitment to God. We must "take time to be holy" and follow our "holy calling" (2 Tim. 1:9).

This means we need to take time during the week to lay aside all the worldly and enslaving distractions in our lives, including our cell phone addictions, become more focused on Christ ("looking unto Jesus" - Heb. 12:2), "set our affection on things above, not on things on the earth" (Col. 3:2), and receive "the wisdom that is from above" (Jam. 3:15) instead of the wisdom of the cyber world, which can be "earthly, sensual, devilish" (Jam. 3:15-17). More time with Jesus (Lk. 10:39, 42) and less time on the Internet results in spiritual living and victory.

What I want to specifically address concerning cell phones is how we can abuse them as Christians and lose our sanctified or spiritual testimony that we are to have before a watching and listening world.

2 Timothy 2:21 reminds us:

“If a man therefore purge himself from these (*the false teachers and their errant teachings*), he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet (*fit or prepared*) for the master's use (*Christ who is our Master*), and prepared unto every good work.”

In other words, we must separate from anyone or anything that might lead us astray with the goal of remaining spiritually clean as a servant of the Lord. This principle applies to our cell phone use. We should not allow our phones and the cyber world to overcome us but overcome them through the victory we have in Christ (1 Jn. 5:4).



God has made a way of victory for us through His empowering and sanctifying grace. He has made “a way of escape” or literally “the way of escape” for each one of us (1 Cor. 10:13). As a result of this promised victory, we don’t have to suffer spiritual defeat through improper cell phone habits. God has made a way of escape for you!

It’s the way of victory over the world, the flesh, and the Devil. This means you don’t have to crash and burn! There is victory through grace – God’s empowering and life-changing grace. This is what is repeatedly taught in the New Testament (Rom. 6:1-15; Jam. 4:6; Heb. 4:16; 2 Cor. 12:9; Phil. 2:13). Grace not only saves us but sets us free from the dark side of the cyber world.

Paul reminds us that, “the fashion of this world passeth away” (1 Cor. 7:31) and John states something similar: “the world passeth away” (1 John 2:17). In fact, the tense of this verb means it is passing away right now, this very moment, which means there is no eternal value and reward attached to the evil system of the world.

So what is the world? It's a system of values, vices, activities, purposes, and pleasures that are opposed to God and which seeks to take us away from God and His will by defeating our spiritual lives. This means anything that steals our devotion from Christ, even cell phones, can become worldly to us when we *abuse* and *misuse* them. Yes, even amoral (nonsinful) things can become a spiritual downfall in our lives and a stumbling block to ourselves and others if we are not careful in the way we use them.

How can we misuse and abuse cell phones?

1. Cell phones and the cyber world can become idols in our lives.

1 John 5:21

"Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen."

Social media and the cyber world of texting, blogs, Facebook, YouTube and such like is not in and of itself bad. There are many good results that a Christian can experience when using the Internet for Biblical instruction and God's glory. However, if we are not careful a cell phone and



the cyber world can become a 21st century golden calf in our daily life (Ex. 32:1-6). Of course, we are not talking about statues sitting in our front yards or inside our homes that we bow down to and worship. A 21st century idol might be a Smart TV, iPhone, or anything else (baseball, golf, and other hobbies) that come between you and God. Cell phones can steal your devotional time with the Lord, keep you from serving the Lord, and take up time which should be given to God. There is a lot of "Golden Calf" idolatry in the Church today which steals the believer's time for God.

Being obsessed with anything that distracts us from fully serving the Lord is essential idolatry. In general, when we are caught up in texting and surfing social media pretty much 24/7, we are basically focusing on ourselves more than God. The media world has become our master instead of Christ who is to be our true Master (Matt. 6:24). In fact, if we are not careful, we can

begin to idolize ourselves and we do this by loving “the praise of men more than the praise of God” (Jn. 12:43) and expressing the “pride of life” (1 Jn. 2:16) when constantly focusing on ourselves (the me-centered and “self-centered philosophy) in texting, blogging, and Facebook.

When we are constantly talking about ourselves it can lead to an unhealthy emphasis of wanting to have many friends so we can become a status symbol and make us feel important or popular. Again, this is an attitude of pride and self-centeredness instead of humility. The Bible says, “Let each esteem other better than themselves” and “Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others” (Phil. 2:3-4).

No, there is nothing wrong with talking or texting one another to catch up on what might be happening in our lives, sharing prayer requests, etc. There is nothing wrong with wholesome friendships (Prov. 18:24). However, we must be careful of becoming focused on “Me, myself, and I” while always sharing countless details about our lives. It is not important for everyone to know what we ate for breakfast, and we went to Walmart at 1:00. What is important is that we seek to help others to focus on Christ and spiritual things.

The Bible says, “He must increase, but I *must* decrease” (Jn. 3:30). How much of your time in texting and blogging truly makes God to increase and you to decrease? God wants us to possess a “redeeming purpose” with our blogs, Facebook, X, and other social media websites.

Ephesians 2:10 declares:

“For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus (*the New Birth*) unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.”

Our cell phones and the cyber world can keep us from fulfilling God’s purpose for our lives which is to do good works that honor Him. If we waste time on social media, we cannot effectively serve the Lord and lose reward which we otherwise could have gained had we been more committed to Christ than our cell phones, computers, Internet, gaming, social media, etc. (2 Jn. 1:8).

Here is a testimony from a man named David: “I recently changed employment to a marketing position and found myself beginning each day by checking e-mail, voicemail, returning phone calls, receiving my schedule on the computer, sending e-mail updates, and texting friends. A large portion of my day was also spent advertising for my company on Facebook and Gmail as well as on other social media outlets. In less than a month of being engrossed in social media I knew that I had changed! I was discouraged, sluggish, short tempered, and ungrateful. What happened? My heart had been divided!

“Later, I was convicted by Psalm 119:10, “With my whole heart I have sought thee...” I read this one morning and learned an important lesson! There are only so many channels of communication that we can manage at a time. It is most important and necessary to listen and to speak to God. If we replace God's word and prayer with texting and Twitter (now known as X), we break the absolute, most important lines of communication in life. In the end, a lack of communication with God will strangle our growth and relationship with him.”

This testimony and study on cell phone use means we should always aim at glorifying the Lord and focusing more on time with Christ who is to be the center of our lives (“**Christ liveth in me**” - Gal. 2:20). **Christianity means we are to possess a dynamic relationship with Christ – not with our cell phones!** We don’t find comfort and the transforming and empowering grace we need for life through our cell phones but because of our enduring relationship with Christ (2 Cor. 12:9; Phil. 4:13, 19). Paul said, “**For to me to live is Christ** *(not cells phones, the cyber world, and social media)*, **and to die is gain** (Phil. 1:21). “**That I may know him ...**” (Phil. 3:10). The center of our lives must revolve around Jesus Christ, our relationship with Him and obedience to His Word which means “bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ” (2 Cor. 10:5). In other words, we are called to “walk worthy of the Lord” (Col.1:10) in the midst of AI and the expanding cyber world.

“Walk worthy of the Lord
Come give your heart to Christ
Live always bearing fruit for Him.
Live strengthened by His might
Walk worthy of the Lord.”

With this in mind, Ephesians 5:15-16 says: **“See then that ye walk circumspectly** (carefully, accurately, diligently), **not as fools** (by watching and listening to anything on the worldwide web and wasting away all your time in texting and social media), **but as wise, Redeeming the time** (make good use of your time), **because the days are evil.”**

To redeem the time means to make or buy up opportunities to serve the Lord and not waste it away through worldly distractions and idols which keep us from growing (1 Pet. 2:2; 2 Pet. 3:18), knowing God better (Phil. 3:10), and serving Him (Rom. 12:11). Time is a horrible thing to waste! Always surfing the Internet leads us to waste time and miss out on other more important things that are going on around us. Most of all it can keep us from our fellowship or communion with God. Normon Trott wrote:

“No time for God
What fools we are, to clutter up
Our lives with common things
And leave outside heart's gate
The Lord of Life and Life itself.”

- ✓ Has your cell phone become an idol in your own life?
- ✓ How many hours do you spend on your cell phone texting, searching for things, watching videos, etc.?
- ✓ How much time do you spend on your cell phone versus time for God, studying the Bible, and spending time with your family?
- ✓ How much do you talk about yourself versus talking about spiritual things?
- ✓ Have you been balancing your comments concerning yourself and activities with your comments about Christ and your sanctifying relationship with Him?
- ✓ Has your time on the Internet become meaningless and fruitless?
- ✓ Has your cell phone and Internet access caused you to lose touch with Christ?

Cell phones can become an idol in our lives when we allow them to take us away from spiritual living, godly commitments, and spending time with God in prayer (Lk. 18:1; Col. 4:2). It's a well-known fact that Christians



sleep with their cell phones out of fear of missing a text! They eat, sleep, and live on their cell phones. The average young person spends two hours a day on TikTok.

Life without a cell phone for many today is a life that seems drab and out of touch. But Paul exclaimed, **“For to me to live is Christ” (Phil. :21) – not cell phones!** We are to have a daily relationship with Christ and not cell phones. Cell phones are a means to an end, allowing us to achieve certain goals, but they are not to become the meaning of our existence. Only Christ can and should be the center and circumference of our lives.

Again, Paul said, **“nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me”** (Gal. 2:20). His focus and faith in life was upon Christ and the meaningful relationship he could have with Him. Anything in this life (including cell phones) which distracts us or takes the place of our relational walk and dependency upon Christ becomes a spiritual barrier to Christ-focused and Christ-centered living. We need to keep “looking unto Jesus” (Heb. 12:2) and not always looking at our cell phones to fill our days and moments. Some Christians want to change the well-known hymn: “When we all get to Heaven what a day for texting that will be.”

Recently my wife and I were walking around a track for our morning exercise. I happened to notice a young man running up and down the bleachers building up a sweat. As I got closer, I noticed he was holding his cell phone in his hand and was actually texting while running up and down the bleachers. Yes, we are to “run with patience the race that is set before us” (Heb. 12:2) but we don’t have to run holding our cell phones!

2. Cell phones and the cyber world can become enslaving to our lives.

Do not allow your iPhone, which can be a helpful tool when used properly, to become a slavedriver and time thief (or worse) in your life and home. There are emotional and sexual addictions that can occur when surfing the cyber world. Emotional addiction is something that controls us, something we feel we cannot live without.



The same is true with sexual addictions. These types of bondage or enslavement to sin can lead to living a double or hypocritical way of life (Matt. 23:28; Rom. 12:9; Jam. 3:17). We are one person in public and another person online.

The danger of idolatry is slavery. When we begin to idolize something, we are one step away from being enslaved by it. It's another well-known fact that cell phones can become an addiction to people. This becomes especially true through the pornographic content that can be viewed on cell phones today via the web. Without proper parameters (guards) when viewing online material, a person can become trapped by "fleshly lusts, which war against the soul" (1 Pet. 2:11). The downfall of many young men occurs when they become lost in the lust of pornography which is only a few finger-taps away.

Cell phone addiction, often referred to as smartphone addiction, is a behavioral dependence on mobile devices that can negatively impact daily life, relationships, and mental health. Symptoms include anxiety when separated from the phone, neglecting real-life interactions, and difficulty in limiting usage. Of course, addiction also occurs when a person is brought under the bondage or slavery to sin through visiting websites that promote sexual promiscuity.

Each man and woman must take the necessary steps to "flee fornication" (1 Cor. 6:18) in all of its forms and "make not provision for the flesh, to *fulfil* the lusts *thereof*" (Rom. 13:14). This may mean that you need to put a guard on your phone or to sparingly use your phone only for calls and text messages and avoid the Internet entirely. You say, "That's impossible to do." No, it's not "For with God nothing shall be impossible" (Lk. 1:37).

Also, you can get phones that don't have access to the Internet. Yes, smartphones without the internet! These phones only focus on basic functions like calling and texting without the distractions of internet browsing and all the temptations that come with it. A person must take any and all necessary steps to free themselves from sin's bondage and enslavement so they can "be free indeed" (Jn. 8:36). We often sin and become addicted to sinful patterns because we continually set ourselves up to sin (Rom. 13:14). In other words, we dig our own grave and jump into it!

Here is a word to the wise. Don't pass the buck on others when you sin. When you are addicted to something, it's your own fault. "But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed" (Jam. 1:14). The Devil did not make you do it, nor did the Internet make you sin; you did it! When you sin it's your own fault. The point is that you can come under bondage to sin when wrongly using and abusing your cell phone.

"Oh be careful little eyes what you see,
Oh be careful little eyes what you see,
For the Father up above is looking down in love,
So be careful little eyes what you see.
Oh be careful little ears what you hear,
Oh be careful little ears what you hear,
For the Father up above is looking down in love,
So be careful little ears what you hear."

The internet is like nuclear power. Harnessed, it's great. Without proper controls, it's deadly. Back in the year 2014, one of the largest pornography video sites reported 78.9 billion video views — 11 for every person on the earth. What might it be today! 90% of kids by age 18 have seen porn on the internet. The average age of first exposure for a child is 11 years, usually inadvertently. Porn is a \$60 billion industry per year worldwide – \$12 billion in the USA (\$32.8 million per day!). These stats will change and continue to only rise. Pornography brings in more than pro baseball, basketball, football & hockey combined... more than the combined revenues of ABC, CBS & NBC. Statistically, sports is not "America's favorite pastime." Porn sites comprise 12% of ALL sites on the internet. 25% of all search engine requests are porn related.

Now, after you pick your jaw up off the floor, let me hit you with one more stat. A university trying to study the effects of pornography attempted to locate a control group of men who had not been exposed to it, so they could compare them with men who had. They cancelled the study; they were unable to find men who had not viewed pornography!

In this kind of world, is it even possible to remain pure? Yes, or else Paul would not give the directive to "keep thyself pure" (1 Tm. 5:22). I imagine there were those who felt the same way about remaining pure in an

impure world when Paul wrote to the Corinthians that they were “called to be saints” (1 Cor. 1:2) - set apart from the world system, holy, and consecrated to God.

I imagine the Corinthians stopped, shook their heads, and looked out the window at the towering mountain fortress of Acro-Corinth above their city. The ancient writers say 1,000 temple prostitutes engaged in “worship” at the temple of Aphrodite. How does anyone follow Christ and be holy in the shadow of the 1,000-prostitute temple? The answer is to follow God’s guidelines for victory to stay on the right side of life.



We are to follow the ...

- ❖ **Right person** — Submit or yield to God as your Lord and Master (Jam. 4:7; Rom. 6:12-13).
- ❖ **Right power** — Rely on the Lord’s strength to live a pure and holy life (Eph. 3:20; 6:10; Phil. 3:10; Col. 1:11).
- ❖ **Right provision** – “And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony” (Rev. 12:11). The shedding of Christ’s blood and death is the basis of our victory (Heb. 2:14-15; Rom. 6:6).
- ❖ **Right position** – Claiming your position in Christ and sharing your union with Christ means we share in His victory over sin (Eph. 1:3; 2:5; Rom. 6:1-7; 2 Cor. 5:17; Col. 2:10).
- ❖ **Right preparation** – Mentally and prayerfully put on your Christian armor (Eph. 6:11-18).
- ❖ **Right pondering** – destroy the bad thoughts and replace them with truth allowing Christ to be lord over your mind (2 Cor. 10:5; Phil. 4:8; Col. 3:2; Eph. 6:17).
- ❖ **Right pledge** - “I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes” (Ps. 101:3); “I made a covenant with mine eyes; why then should I think upon a maid?” (Job 31:1).
“Neither give place to the devil” (Eph. 4:27).

- ❖ **Right precaution** - “Flee fornication” (1 Cor. 6:18); “Flee youthful lusts” (2 Tim. 2:22); “make not provision for the flesh, to *fulfil* the lust *thereof*” (Rom. 13:14) which means don’t plan on sinning, set yourself up to sin, or give no chances for the flesh to have its fling!
- ❖ **Right purpose** – “But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself...” (Dan. 1:8). “Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life.”
- ❖ **Right proclamation** - Confess your sins to God, agree with God about your sins (1 Jn. 1:9), and immediately regain fellowship with the Lord (1 Jn. 1:3, 6, 7; Rev. 3:20). Don’t try and cover your sins (Prov. 28:13). Keep short accounts with God!
- ❖ **Right pleasure** – possess a reverent and healthy fear of God which is the wholesome dread of not pleasing God with your actions and life (2 Cor. 7:1; 1 Pet. 2:17; Eccl. 12:13)

Victory can be yours!

In general, take the initiative through obedience to cleanse your life from sin and uncleanness – both outwardly and inwardly (2 Cor. 7:1; John 13:17; Ps. 1:1-3).

Don’t set yourself up to sin (“make not provision for the flesh, to *fulfil* the lusts thereof” (Rom. 13:14).

Don’t surrender small areas of your heart and life to Satan and if necessary, take back the territory you have surrendered to Satan through repentance (Eph. 4:27).

Walk by faith and not by sight (Eph. 6:16; 2 Cor. 5:7; 1 Jn. 5:4; Heb. 11:1; Prov. 3:5-6).

Possess a sincere (non-hypocritical) heart as you seek to live for Jesus Christ and do what is right (Phil. 1:10; Eph. 6:14).

Don’t let your emotions, flesh, or Satan to overcome and run your life (Jer. 17:9; 1 Pet. 2:11; 1 Pet. 5:8; Eph. 6:11; 2 Cor. 2:11).

Speak life and not death into your daily living (Deut. 30:15, 19; Jer. 21:8).

Remember that one defeat does not mean you lose the war, and every day is a new beginning (Lam. 3:23)!

“Watch and pray” (Matt. 26:41). Stay spiritually alert and keep praying depending on God for victory! Remember the Devil wants to defeat you (1 Pet. 5:8). “Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall” (1 Cor. 10:12).

God has made the way of escape for you, which is His strengthening, enabling, and victorious grace (“who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it” – 1 Cor. 10:13). Remember that you are not a VICTIM but a VICTOR in Christ (Eph. 6:10; 1 Jn. 5:4-5).

1 Corinthians 6:12 is an important Biblical principle to live by:

“All things (neutral/amoral things) **are lawful unto me** (using advanced technology like computers and cell phones), **but all things are not expedient** (suitable in certain situations and places): **all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power** (the authority of enslavement) **of any.”**

Many devices and media options today can be highly addictive in nature stealing our purity, time, and our service and commitment to Jesus Christ. Perhaps one of the most damaging parts of constant texting and Internet addiction is the Christian’s inability to connect with and evangelize the lost (Mk. 16:15).

- ✓ Are you addicted to the world of porn and lustful pleasure?
- ✓ Are you enslaved to listening to rock music on your cell phone?
- ✓ Are you addicted to texting, Facebook, YouTube, X, blogging, or other people’s blogs?
- ✓ Can you go one day without using your cell phone?
- ✓ How much time do you spend surfing the Internet?
- ✓ Have you been careless and in bondage to the cyber world?
- ✓ Are you ready to put God’s plan of victory into action and live on higher ground instead of being constantly defeated by sin?
- ✓ How is your web addiction keeping you from serving the Lord?

3. Cell phones and the cyber world can desensitize our lives.



The Bible states, “Love not the world, neither the things *that* are in the world...” (1 Jn. 2:15). It goes without saying that because cell phones can become idols and enslave us through the content being viewed online, we need to conclude that the wrong use of

cell phones can result in worldly living. But sadly, we as Christians can become desensitized to worldly or carnal living and lose our Biblical worldview. This happens when we use our cell phones to repeatedly enter the forbidden zones, allowing sinful images to be displayed before our eyes, listening to rock music, opening up our lives and putting up with various unethical norms and vices. Over and over again we engage in cyber worldliness and eventually we become desensitized to the sinful depravity we are involved with.

Our heart must be guarded from becoming desensitized to sin.

Proverbs 4:23 says:

“Keep thy heart (*put a guard around our heart*) with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life.”

Psalms 119:10

“With my whole heart have I sought thee: O let me not wander from thy commandments.”

We must beware of “the deceitfulness of sin” (Heb. 3:13). Sin has a way of desensitizing and deluding us which results in our denial of engaging in untoward and unethical activities. **Remember that almost any behavior or practice begins to look and sound normal if you are exposed to enough of it.** Over time, the dark side of the cyber world has a way of desensitizing us to sin. We begin to “feel comfortable” (comfortable with compromise and carnal practices) which do not align with the Bible. Isaiah 5:20 declares, “Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!”

What was once nonnegotiable can over time become acceptable for Christians after being exposed to enough of it. This is why some Christians post on the Internet certain movies, music, or television shows they “like” even when they promote rock music, immoral content, filthy language, or even the occult (wizardry, sorcery, witchcraft) which the Bible condemns (Lev. 19:31; Gal. 5:19-21). Why do they do this? It’s because they have become desensitized to sin and “love to have it so” (Jer. 5:31). The flesh wins out over the Spirit (Gal. 5:18-26) and as a result they exalt the very sins that nailed Jesus Christ to the cross (1 Pet. 2:24).

Our prayer should be that of the hymnwriter.

“I want a principle within
Of jealous, godly fear,
A sensibility of sin,
A pain to feel it near.
I want the first approach to feel
Of pride or fond desire,
To catch the wand’ring of my will,
And quench the kindling fire.”

How can the wrong use of cell phones and other electronic devices hinder our Christian lives?

➤ **We copy the world system.**

Don’t be a copycat! We must learn to use cell phones in ways that do not reflect or cause us to follow the world system. This is because we are summoned by God to

COPYCAT

“love not the world” (1 Jn. 2:15) and to not be “conformed to the world” (Rom. 12:2). All of our love and loyalty must be funneled toward God and His holy purposes for our daily lives. God does not want us to copy the world system. Let’s revisit this question. What is the world? The “world” is an organized system made up of activities, purposes, pleasures, dominating principles, lusts, pride, motives, rebellious music, fleshly pursuits, vices, values, Satan’s spiritual world of darkness, and “such like” (Gal. 5:21) that are opposed to God, and which take us away from our allegiance to Him.

I want to share an email that was sent to me from a missionary in Africa who felt the need to address a particular cell phone issue. This email should strike a chord in our hearts and make us think about our cell phone use.

Dear Friends,

“The other day at Bible study I was encouraging the folks to honor God with every area of their lives. As an application I mentioned the ring tones on a cell phone. It is amazing how many Christians use unchristian tones on their cell phones. It is almost as though they think they don't need to honor God in that area.

“When I mentioned this, in true Zulu fashion, there were a few snickers. It is common for Zulu people to laugh when you catch them at something. A few others looked at me in amazement, as though God has nothing to do with cell phones.”

Should a Christian who really wants to practice godly separation and possess a sanctified testimony before a watching and listening world play any kind of ringtones or songs on his or her cell phone? I’m discovering that even Christians who embrace the Biblical position of separation (2 Cor. 6:14-17; 1 Tim. 6:3) have become lackadaisical and sloppy in their cell phone use regarding certain ringtones or songs which reflect the world’s music (the rock idiom). Somehow, we have sanctified worldly rock and roll ringtones or the music of the world system which in the end can harm us and our testimony for the Lord.

I was in a meeting with about twenty-five pastors. As we were sitting there enjoying lunch one of the pastor’s cell phones rang. Or should I say his cell phone began to rock and roll! I was surprised that a pastor who should be an example to the sheep would play a ringtone of this nature on his cell phone. As Christians, we are to practice separation from the world system which represents Satan, sin, and sinister practices (“Be not ye therefore like unto them” – Matt. 6:8). Rebellious music that has wrecked the lives of millions of people should not be promoted by Christians.

Romans 12:2 declares:

“And be not conformed (molded) to this world (including your cell phone rings and music you listen to on your phone): **but be ye transformed**

(spiritually changed) **by the renewing** (renovation, a complete change) **of your mind, that ye may prove** (discern or know) **what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God**” (God’s holy purpose for your life).

In some measure we conform or mold ourselves to the world system when we enjoy playing ringtones or listening to rock music on our iPhones which reflects musical rebellion. Whenever we play rock music, we are to some degree molding or patterning our lives after the world system that is against God and His holy ways. Let us never forget this.

1 John 2:15-16 is a general description of worldliness:

“Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh (*sins of passion – indulgence – “I’m taking this”*), and the lust of the eyes (*sins of possession – covetousness – “I want this”*), and the pride of life (*sins of position or status – “I can become this”*), is not of the Father, but is of the world.

To some extent we love the world system more and love God less when we view pornographic material on the Internet and play ringtones that reflect the musical standards of the world and listen to the sounds and words of culturally corrupt music on our phones. We might think listening to rock music, including CCM (Contemporary Christian Music) is the “cool” or acceptable thing to do since everybody seems to be doing it, but in actuality, an acquired affection, taste, and love for the world begins to creep into our lives when we begin to cater to the music of the world and flesh. We are told to “taste and see that the LORD is good” (Ps. 34:8) without tasting the delights that the world offers.

As believers in Christ, we must remember that we are accountable to God who sees everything that we do.

Hebrews 4:13

“Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.”

Every click on the mouse and every website we visit on our cell phone is openly seen by God. He is watching us while we might be listening to profanity, rock music, viewing pornography, or being involved in a chat room on the Internet which is carnal or fleshly. The eyes of God are upon me; He sees everything I do!



God's knowledge of everything that we do should be a helpful deterrent to what I call "sin surfing" on the Internet. God has called us to live a virtuous life filled with integrity ("called us to glory and virtue" – 2 Pet. 1:3) – not a corrupt cyber life overrun and bogged down with sin.

Someone said:

"Integrity is not about convenience, it's an unwavering commitment to doing the right thing in every action you take and every decision you make, especially when no one is looking."

Who are you when you are all alone and in the dark? The Bible says that we should seek to disassociate ourselves from anything in the world that is a clear violation of Biblical holiness.



Men are especially vulnerable to the cypher world of porn. They can especially be susceptible to the dangers from technology (specifically the Internet) with the open glorification of pornography. But every Christian man needs to remember the wisdom of 1 Corinthians 15:33: "**Be not deceived: evil communications (companionships) corrupt good manners**" (*morals or ethics*). When you are surfing the net and enter the "crash zones" where you are captivated by evil companionships such as illicit pictures and videos, the end result is that you become overcome by lust and take a spiritual nosedive. You lose your virtue and integrity. The end result is you begin to starve spiritually and suffer spiritual malnutrition.

The Bible warns men to stay away from the “strange woman” or temptress.

Proverbs 5:3

“For the lips of a strange woman drop as an honeycomb, and her mouth is smoother than oil.”

Proverbs 5:8 then gives us a word of warning:

“Remove thy way far from her, and come not nigh (*near*) the door of her house” (*or don’t visit her website!*).

Proverbs 6:28

“For by means of a whorish woman a man is brought to a piece of bread: and the adulteress will hunt for the precious life.”

Proverbs 23:26-28

“My son, give me thine heart, and let thine eyes observe my ways. For a whore is a deep ditch; and a strange woman is a narrow pit. She also lieth in wait as for a prey, and increaseth the transgressors among men.”

Psalm 101:3 should be every man’s resolution:

“I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes: I hate the work of them that turn aside; it shall not cleave to me.”

You get the idea! There is no room for any tolerance! Give an inch and lose a yard! If you are looking for porn on the web, then you are going to find many “strange women” or “whorish” women who will drown your spiritual life in lustful living. I’ve counseled men for many years and have discovered the greatest downfall of Christian men is *toleration* rather than *hatred* of flesh-exciting media at home and above all else on their cell phones. God summons us as men to “Hate the evil, and love the good” (Amos 5:15). It concludes that “Ye that love the LORD, hate evil” (Ps. 97:10).

Proverbs 4:14-15 gives the best web surfing and browsing advice:

“Enter not into the path of the wicked (don’t enter the dark web), **and go not in the way of evil men** (following the path of lust and spiritual defeat). **Avoid it** (don’t click on the website), **pass not by it** (don’t even think of going there!), **turn from it** (turn away from sin by trusting in God’s power

and plan of victory), **and pass away**" (pass these dark websites through using Internet guards and the best guard of all – "Be strong in the Lord and the power of his might" – Eph. 6:10).

What part of this don't we understand! In other words, don't surf those websites that are pornographic in nature. Don't go there. Don't even think about going there because when you do, you will eventually end up there! Don't make it easy for yourself to sin. Christian men (young and older) must do everything and anything they can to avoid these fleshly traps and crash zones. We must avoid sin at all cost! Demolish these thoughts in your mind ("**casting down imaginations**" - 2 Cor. 10:5) and replace them with God's thoughts, and by God's empowering grace don't go there!

This means you can stop surfing into sin. You can say no to sin! You don't have to be overcome by the cyber world of darkness since you are already an overcomer in Christ (1 Jn. 5:4). This means you can claim your victory in Christ and not live on the dark side of the Internet.



Here is some important advice. **Don't get caught on the web!** Instead of being caught and captivated by the worldwide web, concentrate on your relationship with your family. Concentrate on our relationship with your spouse. And most of all concentrate on your relationship with God. Think of the consequences of getting caught in the dark side of the Internet.

Proverbs 22:3

"A prudent (*sensible, wise*) man foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself: but the simple (*naive, foolish*) pass on, and are punished."

In Matthew 26:41 Jesus taught us to:

"Watch (*keep spiritually alert*) **and pray** (keep praying and stay close to God) **that ye enter not into temptation** (that you are not caught off guard when



being tempted): **the spirit indeed is willing** (wanting not to sin), **but the flesh is weak**" (our body and natural human frailties can overcome us).

The dark web is filled with fornication, adultery, male and female homosexuality, satanism, wizardry, communism, woke ideology, rock music, and every form of darkness and evil imaginable. This would include gamers who are addicted to unethical video games, including online gaming, which are filled with scantily dressed women, sexuality, repetitive murder scenes, vulgarity, and other unethical things a gamer can actively participate with. A recent survey revealed that many teens spend up to five hours on the Internet playing games. This detaches them from the world of reality and introduces them to fake and artificial relationships.

God summons us in 1 Thessalonians 5:22:

"Abstain from all appearance (*every form*) of evil."



How can we refrain from lust when we are viewing pornography on our cell phones? How can we abstain or refrain from the form of rebellious rock music when we are playing it and listening to it on our cell phones? This is impossible to do. Christians must use better discernment and judgment

today ("judge righteous judgment" - Jn. 7:24) in what they listen to and the kinds of ringtones they use on their cell phones. When we play music on our cell phone that reflects the world system or "the spirit of the world" (1 Cor. 2:12), we are not abstaining from the wickedness that is being promoted in secular society.

1 Peter 2:11

"Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul."

Many Christians don't care if they embrace and promote the musical rebellion that is part of our perverted culture. Instead of separating from it they participate with it and violate the Scriptural command of separation ("Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord" - 2 Cor.

6:17). Christians might crave or desire to interact with the heathenism of society, but the Bible commands us to “Learn not the way of the heathen” (Jer.10:2). This means we are not to “Learn the way of rock music.” Instead, we are to be a “new creation” (2 Cor. 5:17) that reflects radical change in life. Paul’s prayer was that “Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death” (Phil. 1:20).

One young person said to me: “It’s just a ringtone.” Yes, it’s just a ringtone. We might also add, “It’s just one alcoholic drink. It’s just one little curse word. It’s just one obscene picture on our cell phone.” Solomon warned long ago about “the little foxes, that spoil the vines” (Sng. 2:15). Yes, it’s just a



ringtone, but it’s also a reflection of a system which is opposed to God’s character of holiness and righteousness. God once again commands us to “Be ye holy; for I am holy” (1 Pet. 1:17). Holiness is a COMMAND to be obeyed, a COURSE to be followed, and a COMMITMENT to be kept!

“Take time to be holy, the world rushes on;
Spend much time in secret with Jesus alone.
By looking to Jesus, like Him thou shalt be;
Thy friends in thy conduct His likeness shall see.”



We must “take time to be holy” and this may mean for you to spend less time on the Internet and more time in devotions, prayer, the Word of God and serving the Lord. It may mean to get off the web completely and break away from the cyber world of allurements and fantasy. The Bible reminds us that “Ye that love the LORD, hate evil” (Ps. 97:10) and commands us to “Hate the evil, and love the good” (Amos 5:15).

Yes, it’s just a cell phone ring that reflects rock music, it’s just a little nudity, a little cursing, but these things send a message of compromise and defeat

in the Christian life. They reflect what you believe, what you promote, and what you enjoy listening to and watching on the web. When you play that rock ringtone and surf the dark parts of the web, you are to some extent copying and patterning your life after worldly music, unrighteousness, darkness, Satan's workings, and the unbelieving lifestyle of wicked people (2 Cor. 6:14-15). You also begin to experience and enjoy "fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness" (Eph. 5:11). When you compromise with sin it sends an opposing message to Biblical separation, holiness, Christ, and Christianity. Onions and ice cream don't mix, neither does righteousness with unrighteousness. Think of this the next time you are tempted to play and promote rock tunes and music on your cell phone or view sexually explicit pictures.



Remember that the world system with its rebellious music and defiling sexual conduct is in defiance against God (Jam. 4:4). Why listen to and play on your cell phone the secular sounds of a system that is perverted, rebellious, and which sets itself against God? Why use your cell phone to feed your lustful cravings which break your fellowship with God and keep you bound to sin? As Christians, we have been given the privilege of being delivered from the world system that dishonors God ("who hath delivered us from the power of darkness" - Col. 1:13; Gal. 1:4).

Since God has given us this promised deliverance, we should be reflecting God's light in our testimony and walk ("walk in the light" – 1 Jn. 1:7) by not allowing our cell phones, the Internet, lust, and worldly music to overcome our lives. Therefore, we should not attempt to participate with or promote that which opposes God and His holiness while using our smartphones.

2 Corinthians 6:14-15 asks these important questions: "... for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion

hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?”

This means you should not mix Satan’s kingdom of darkness with God’s kingdom of light. This is what we do when we mix religious themes with the secular sound of rock music. This is what happens when we surrender our bodies to lustful images that we view on the Internet and allow them to capture our hearts, enslave us, and we end up committing fornication and adultery in our hearts (Matt. 5:28).

- ✓ Do you think that you have the right to fellowship or participate with the musical lyrics and sounds of a world that is in rebellion against God?
- ✓ How can the light of Christianity be reflected in the dark world of rock music which since its inception has represented sex, drugs, and rebellion against God?
- ✓ You might conclude that you are listening to soft rock. Have you ever been hit by a soft rock?!
- ✓ Have you been joining your body with harlots on the internet as they seduce you and lead you into fornication or adultery?
- ✓ What connection can the Christian life have with Satan (“Belial”) who is behind rock music, or what part should a Christian have with the lifestyle of unsaved people who are under the powerful control of satanic rock music and sexual addictions?
- ✓ Have you been fellowshiping with the unfruitful works of darkness?

Christian brother and sister, you ought to think before you listen to rock artists, including so-called Christian rock artists on your iPhones, or when you openly play rock tunes on your cell phones. You need to think before beginning to surf for lewd pictures on the dark side of the web and begin looking for lustful, devilish, and worldly vices which will take you down from a spiritual perspective, stunt your spiritual growth (2 Pet. 3:18), and break your fellowship with God (Jam. 4:8).

Reflect on *who* you are representing and *what* you associate with when playing the musical sounds of a world system that sets itself against God and His holy standard. Remember that when engaging in sexual fantasy

acts you are in some sense becoming one with the harlot or prostitute in a forbidden relationship. “What? know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot is one body? for two, saith he, shall be one flesh” (1 Cor. 6:16). “Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body” (1Cor. 6:18). “Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart” (2Tim. 2:22).

This means that single and married men should refresh their minds and hearts before connecting to the Internet. God gives younger and older men many warnings before using the Internet. Let’s repeat some of the warnings. Pay attention! “For the lips of a strange



woman drop as an honeycomb, and her mouth is smoother than oil” (Prov. 5:3). “Remove thy way far from her, and come not nigh the door of her house” (Prov. 5:8). “And why wilt thou, my son, be ravished with a strange woman, and embrace the bosom of a stranger? (Prov. 5:20). “Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men. Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away” (Pro 4:14-15). In other words, do everything you can to avoid the dark side of the Internet. Don’t play with fire. You will be burnt!

Married men must also take to heart God’s Word before connecting to the cyber world. “Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it” (Eph. 5:23). “Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband” (Eph 5:33). “Drink waters out of thine own cistern, and running waters out of thine own well” (Prov. 5:15).



Both women and men must also take precautions because the world of lesbianism (female homosexuality or romantic relationships between two women) and male homosexuality (illicit relationships between men) is seeking to overtake the minds and hearts of those who are surfing the worldwide web of darkness. Christians can also

become caught in the web of homosexuality, bisexuality, and transgenderism depending on their exposure to these sinful atrocities in their past environment, heterosexual marriage failures, lack of self-image and wanting acceptance, and their openness to seek a new sexual orientation on the dark web. Opening oneself to the sin and sexual dysfunction of homosexuality or transgenderism (a learned lifestyle) results in the loss of one's sexual identity (Rom. 1:26-28) and can bring lasting harm to family and heterosexual marriage relationships.

Of course, there is nothing wrong with texting but there can be worldly entrapments attached to it. Flirtatious texting (or sexting) can become a vice in our lives when we send code letters and words and seductive pictures to one another. Not only is this a waste of time, but it also sets



us up for creating seductive and unbiblical friendships and relationships in our Christian lives. We cannot afford to become emotionally involved, attached, and enslaved to artificial Internet relationships.

The seduction of many young Christian women and men has occurred through the wrong use of the cyber world. You can become trapped in adultery, fornication, homosexuality, and other levels of depravity which can overtake your life and undermine your family, marriage, and other God-ordained relationships. It's important to not lie about your true spiritual condition (1 Jn. 1:6) and fool yourself (1 Jn. 1:8) "through the deceitfulness of sin" (Heb. 3:12).

In fact, today many worldly Christians will use the theological cuss word of "legalism" for anyone who disagrees with their chosen way of life and calls that person a legalist. However, if you are one of God's children who concludes that you have the Christian liberty to watch R-rated movies on Netflix and fill your mind and heart with immoral scenes on the Internet,

then you have redefined the true meaning of liberty and are using “liberty for an occasion to the flesh” (Gal. 5:13). Stop living in a fool’s paradise!



Once again, the Bible reminds us: “**Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners**” (1 Cor. 15:33). Let’s face it, the virtual (online) world of the Internet can easily deceive us into sacrificing authentic relationships for the counterfeit. While these online relationships may appear to be more fun for a time (“the pleasures of sin for a season” – Heb.

11:25), in the end they are unhealthy and unwise, they will not bring true and lasting fulfillment, and they can be destructive to the nonvirtual and true relationships we are to have with our friends, wives, husbands, and family members. We must be proactive in protecting our marriages and relationships which the fake and illusionary world of the Internet can destroy.

We should want to represent Christianity in the best possible light by approving only excellent or superior things in our speech, living, and cell phone activity.

Philippians 1:10

“That ye may approve things that are excellent (*superior*); that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ.”

If Christians would separate themselves from worldly music, including rock ring tones, if they would stop viewing pornographic material and approve only excellent or superior content in relation to their musical and viewing habits on the web, they would represent a separated or holy Christian life that reflects Christlikeness (2 Cor. 3:18). Christians can



copy and imitate the carnal likeness of the world and unsaved (1 Cor. 3:1, 3; Rom. 7:14; 8:7; 1 Pet. 2:11) but God has a better way for us to live. We are to live on a higher plane adopting a superior and separated lifestyle.

Excellent or superior things are the best things, the clean and wholesome things, the non-dirty and non-pornographic things, and the non-carnal or fleshly things related to musical lyrics and sounds. We should always strive for “excellence” in our musical choices and viewing habits. Anything less than the best will begin to slowly erode our spiritual life and commitments to Jesus Christ who has called us to be follower or disciple of Him and His ways. “And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me” (Lk. (:23).

Here is the point. We are instructed to be followers or imitators (copycats) of God (Eph. 5:1) – not imitators of the world. How can we be like God when we are imitating and imbibing the world by looking at obscene graphics, listening to cursing and rock music, and playing rock ringtones on our cell phones? Many Christians want to “walk as men” (1 Cor. 3:3) but not “walk in the light” (1 Jn. 1:7). Instead, they are reflecting the unsaved or unregenerate manner of lifestyle and participating with the present-day compromised Christianity which follows the “live and let live” philosophy and concludes: “You’re okay and I’m okay.”

As a Christian, God has called us to reprove or correct the sinful works of darkness – not view them or play them on our cell phones!

Ephesians 5:11 again states:

“And have no fellowship (*partnership*) with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove (*correct*) them.”

The separated and sanctified Christian should always refuse to fellowship or participate with anything that reflects the darkness of sin, Satan, and the self-life which sets itself against God and His holy standards.

Ask yourself these questions the next time you are tempted to view lustful images and change your ringtone on your cell phone.

- ✓ Are you being conformed to the pattern of the world system by what you are looking at and what you are playing on your cell phone?
- ✓ Are you copying the rock idiom of worldly music when playing your ringtones?
- ✓ Are you to some degree fellowshiping with darkness, unrighteousness, Satan's world, and the unbelieving lifestyle of lost people?
- ✓ Are you approving excellent things with your viewing habits on the Internet and the ringtones you play on your phone?
- ✓ Are you imitating God's holiness?
- ✓ Are you reproofing or approving the works of darkness?

How else can the wrong use of cell phones and other electronic devices hinder our Christian lives?

➤ **We conceal our light.**

Ephesians 5:8 declares:

"For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light."

Walk as children of light! God's children are to represent light in a darkened world of sin. This means that when our cell phones become idols to us, when they enslave us to lust, or when we use them to promote rock music, we are not representing light, and we certainly are not portraying ourselves as children of light (Jn. 12:36). If we are going to emulate God's light or holiness (1 John 1:5) in our everyday lives, then we must stop trying to cover or conceal the light by the kind of ringtones we play on our cell phones and the dark or sinful places we visit on the web.



We cannot be light when rock music is blaring out of our cell phones. We cannot be light when in the dark of night, we are in our room watching the despicable acts of nakedness, fornication, and become like the children of Israel who "rose up to play" (a euphemism for sexual pleasure outside God's will). How can we be light when we are surfing the dark web to find

illicit graphics, movies, and such like? How can we be light before a watching and listening unsaved world (Matt. 5:14) when we play the same kind of rebellious music that deceives, controls, and enslaves the lives of millions of people?

Out of the darkness and into the light! This is to be our testimony!

1 Peter 2:9

“But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people (*a people belonging to God and possessed only by God*); that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness (*including the dark side of the web*) into his marvellous light.”

We are to be light reflectors of God’s holiness for Christ has said: “Ye are the light of the world” (Matt. 5:14).

“How beautiful to walk in the steps of the Savior,
Stepping in the light, Stepping in the light;
How beautiful to walk in the steps of the Savior,
Led in paths of light.”

God has called us to be *transformer* and not a *conformer* for the Bible commands us in Romans 12:2, “**And be not conformed** (molded) **to this world: but be ye transformed** (experience a metamorphosis like a butterfly) **by the renewing of your mind** (renovate or change the way you think), **that ye may prove** (discern or know) **what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God**” (God’s sanctified will for your life).

Are you a chameleon Christian? Are you trying to blend in with society and the world system? God does not want us to be *blender* but a *defender* of His holy way. God has called us to do what is right and manifest light (holiness) as we refuse to view specific images on the Internet which create lust in our hearts and by making the decision to not listen to and play rock music on our cell phones. Stop visiting the dark side of the web. God’s Word commands us to WAKE up, GET up, and LIGHT up (Eph. 5:14).





Remember that if you are going to curse the darkness, then light a candle! And then shine for Jesus! God has called us to “walk as children of light” (Eph. 5:8; 1 Thess. 5:5). The more light or holiness we portray in our Christian lives will result in a good testimony before an unbelieving world (Col. 4:5; 1 Thess. 4:12) but also have a positive impact upon those whom

we live and interact with on a daily basis. Here is the point. When we view explicit material on the Internet or play tunes and tones on our cell phones that dishonors God’s holiness, we lose the light and testimony that we should have as a Christian. In short, our candle goes out!

1 Timothy 4:12 speaks of the believer’s overall testimony:

“Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity.”

Yes, we are commanded to be an example in what we **SAY** (“word”), what we **DO** (“conversation” – manner of lifestyle), what we **LOVE** (“charity”), what we **DESIRE** (“spirit”), what we **BELIEVE** (“faith”), and what we **PORTRAY** (“purity”). You can either live out this kind of testimony before others by correctly using your cell phone for God’s glory or you can lose your testimony when you conceal the light and hide in the darkness. The choice is yours. The ball is in your court!

- ✓ Are you playing music and ringtones on your cell phone that represents what is right and light?
- ✓ Does your musical iPhone habits reflect that you are a child of light?
- ✓ Do your ringtones set a godly and pure example before others?
- ✓ Do your viewing habits on your cell phone reflect the light of God’s holiness?
- ✓ Can you honestly say that what you watch, listen to, and promote with your cell phone reflects righteousness and godliness?
- ✓ Are you a chameleon Christian?

➤ **We cannot glorify God.**

As we have seen in our previous point, God wants us to be light bearers and not light detractors. This means we should use our bodies in an honorable or respectful way that reflects God's character of holiness and righteousness and "**walk in the light** (which includes using our cell phones in the light, in a holy manner), **as he (God) is in the light**" (1 John 1:7). When we don't represent light, we dishonor God and His glory (the character of His person) is not displayed in our lives.



1 Corinthians 6:19-20 speaks of glorifying God with our bodies: "What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost (*Spirit*) which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body (*outward actions*), and in your spirit (*inward desires*), which are God's."



The meaning behind God indwelling us as believers portrays the important truth that since our bodies are God's holy temples or dwelling places, we should glorify (honor and respect) His presence within us, allowing our bodies to be controlled by God instead of becoming the dumping ground for the world, the flesh, and the Devil. In other words, God's indwelling presence within our human bodies should result in glorifying God with our bodies as we allow Him to

control them and properly represent the holy and righteous God who lives within us. If we are using our bodies to lust after images we are viewing on our phones, becoming slaves to sin, and if we are allowing our phones to

become our idols and keep us from growing and becoming like Christ, then God is not getting the glory.

Once again, my missionary friend from Africa wrote:

“It is amazing how many Christians use unchristian tones on their cell phones. It is almost as though they think they don't need to honor God in that area.”

Sometimes we forget that we should honor or glorify God in every area of our lives including our cell phone use.

1 Thessalonians 4:4

“That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel (*the body*) in sanctification and honour.”

This Bible verse reminds us that we should use our bodies in a way that is sanctified (holy) and honorable (worthy or respectful) since our bodies are God's vessel in which He lives (2 Tim. 2:20–21). Our bodies are *owned* and therefore should be *controlled* by God (1 Cor. 6:19) so we might honor the Lord with our lives.

Another way of saying this is that we should glorify God in everything that we do. This includes how we use our cell phones.

1 Corinthians 10:31 is a familiar verse often overlooked:

“Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.”

The Bible teaches that we should bring glory or honor to God by reflecting His character and ways in everything that we do. This truth of properly representing God's character or likeness pertains to every area of our lives. When we are like God He gets the glory, when we are not like God His glory is misrepresented. This truth gets down to what we view and play on our iPhones.

Again, when our phones have become idols to us, taking us away from our time with Christ and robbing us of spiritual growth, when we are enslaved to lustful sins through improper use of our phones, and when we play or listen to rock songs from our cell phones, we are not bringing glory to God.

We can only glorify or honor God when we display His character of holiness, righteousness, mercy, and love within our personal lives and before others.



To glorify God means to demonstrate who God is by the way we live. It means to display God's character and reflect His actions within our own lives and before others "perfecting holiness in the fear of God" (2 Cor. 7:1). When we are like God, we glorify God. When we live for the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, God does not get the glory.

In other words, God cannot be glorified or honored when we have allowed our cell phone to become an idol, a spiritual stumbling block, and using it to imbibe cultural worldliness. We are called to honor God who is righteous, holy, and pure. When we misuse our iPhones, we do not reflect who God is in His eternal being and character who said, "Be ye holy; for I am holy" (1 Pet. 1:16).

God has called each one of us as His followers to be **salt** (Matt. 5:13) *preserving* the truth and **light** (Matt. 5:14-16) *reflecting* the truth. When we idolize our phones, allow them to negatively impact our spiritual life, and when we listen to rebellious rock music on our phones and openly display it before others in our ringtones, then we in some measure lose our salt and light. We dishonor God, His name, and misrepresent who God is before a listening and watching world.

- ✓ Do you demonstrate that you are God's vessel while spending time on your cell phone?
- ✓ Have you been misrepresenting God and have you failed to claim His victorious delivering power over sin?
- ✓ Are you losing your salt and light because of bad viewing habits on your cell phone?
- ✓ Can you honestly say that you are glorifying God when evaluating the amount of time that you spend on your iPhone verses your time serving and living for the Lord?

- ✓ Can you honestly conclude what you have been viewing or listening to on your cell phone brings glory to God?

➤ **We are concerned about pleasing ourselves and others.**



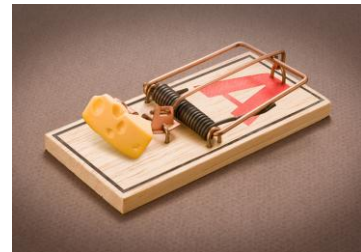
Many Christians are simply living to please themselves instead of Jesus Christ. Instead of having Christ on the throne

of their hearts they have self on the throne. Every Christian needs to place himself on God's altar of sacrifice and obey the initiative to "present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service" (Rom. 12:1). But today many Christians do what they want to do and "love to have it so" (Jer. 5:31) without considering if their actions are truly pleasing to Christ.

2 Timothy 2:4 says:

"No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier."

Do you really want to please the Lord with your cell phone usage? If so, you will not spend all your time on your cell phone but find more time and ways to expand your service to the Lord (Eph. 5:16; Col. 4:5). You will not allow your phone to become an idol in your life.



In addition, "the fear of man bringeth a snare" (Prov. 29:25) or trap which means peer pressure often causes many Christians to misuse their iPhones to please others instead of God. The pressure mounts "to go along to get along" and the Christian ends up following the pressure and advice of others ("the counsel of the ungodly" - Ps. 1:1) instead of the clearly revealed instruction and truth of God's Word (Jn. 17:17).

Galatians 1:10 asks this enduring question:

"For do I now persuade men (*win the approval of others*), or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ."

Who are you really trying to please in life? Whose approval do we want? Is it the crowd or Christ? Jesus said, “I do always those things that please him” (Jn. 8:29). Pleasing God ought to be our major motive in the Christian life. Enoch walked with God and before God called him to Heaven, he “had this testimony, that he pleased God” (Heb. 11:5). The same should be true of our lives while we use our cell phones, or more specifically, in the way we choose to use them.

- ✓ Is pleasing God your sole desire while using your phone?
- ✓ Are you being pressured by others to view images that are lustful and listen to songs which are worldly in nature?
- ✓ What does God think when you choose to play rock music?
- ✓ Are you ready to make the commitment to have God’s approval with your cell phone surfing and viewing habits?
- ✓ What steps do you need to take to change the way you use your phone?
- ✓ Do you need to be accountable to someone else?

➤ **We can lead others astray.**



The Bible teaches that I can offend others and lead them astray when I *abuse* my liberty in Christ. I am warned to “use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh” (to fulfill my own carnal and sinful desires). Likewise, 1 Peter 2:16 warns about “using your liberty for a cloak of maliciousness” (to cover up the bad or evil things a person wants to do). We can disguise our actions under the code word “liberty” by making them appear to be something that is good when actually they are fleshly and carnal in nature. This is like trying to disguise a kale salad as a hot fudge sundae!

Now let’s make the application of this to using cell phones. A cell phone is amoral (nonsinful) and there is nothing wrong when using a cell phone for “all things are lawful” (1 Cor. 6:12) in the realm of modern technology unless we become enslaved to technology and it becomes our master. Jesus taught that **“No man can serve two masters”** (Matt. 6:24). It cannot

be Christ and technology at the same time. It's one or the other! This means we don't have the liberty to turn our phone into a devil's den of iniquity, sinking deep into sin and far from the peaceful shore. However, when we abuse our liberty and stumble, we might just cause others to stumble with us. Others may go down with the ship! Thie Bible repeatedly warns us about this.



Proverbs 4:16 concludes:

"For they sleep not, except they have done mischief (*like surfing the dark side of the web*); and their sleep is taken away, unless they cause some to fall."

There is a principle we can learn from this verse and apply to our lives which is summed up in the words: "cause some to fall." Our sin can have adverse effects on others. It can cause others to stumble. We can wrongly influence others and bring them down with us in spiritual defeat.

Proverbs 22:24-25 also states:

"Make no friendship with an angry man; and with a furious man thou shalt not go: Lest thou learn his ways, and get a snare to thy soul."

We are reminded that our sins can have a negative impact on the lives of others. The word "snare" is an illustration of this. As a Christian we should think before we play music from our cell phone that represents the rock idiom and the world of Satan and rebellion. Not only is our testimony and life corrupted in some way when doing this, the life and testimony of others may also become spiritually sidetracked or shipwrecked (1 Tim. 1:19) due to our own lack of dedication and commitment to God's holy ways.

For instance, abusing our cell phone by openly and improperly playing rock music can bring back the memories of rock addiction to others and cause them to stumble in their Chrisian discipleship and living. In this case, we

should not cause a brother to stumble by abusing our liberty and failing to set a Biblical example (1 Tim. 4:12).

There are other examples. We can cause younger Christians to stumble when they witness our lack of dedication to Christ and His cause because of the time we spend on electronic devices. We can cause others to stumble when we fail to demonstrate purity in our own Christian life because of our moral failures associated with Internet viewing. We might cause our testimony to be tainted which can become a stumbling block to another Christian's spiritual life especially if they look up to us as a mentor and godly person.

Romans 14:20 also gives another enduring principle to follow:
"For meat destroy not the work of God. All things indeed are pure; but it is evil for that man who eateth with offence."

Even if a particular practice is neutral and pure ("meat" or the Internet), we still should not seek to do anything that might cause a person to stumble (Rom. 14:15, 21; 1 Cor. 8:13; 10:32). Of course, this is especially true when we abuse our liberty through sinful practices which can destroy the faith of others and cause them to take a spiritual tumble in their Christian life. Our sinful living and compromises with the world can have a negative effect on other Christians. Like a domino effect, when we fall, we can cause others to also stumble or fall in their Christian faith and commitment to God.

What is your profile? What do others gather about you from the posts you make? Do they perceive that you are "walking in the light" (1 Jn. 1:7; Eph. 5:8) or the darkness (1 Jn. 1:6)? Are your posts and comments edifying or self-seeking? Are they God-glorifying? Will they cause someone else to stumble in their Christian walk with the Lord?

You might post something on Facebook or create something on YouTube that is questionable or downright unethical and this could cause another Christian to stumble. You could be part of a blog and say something that is unkind, off the cuff, that has sexual overtones, and which is certainly unchristian or unbiblical in nature and hurt others. The old adage that says "sticks and stones may break my bones, but words may never harm me" is not true. Unkind words, coarse language, sleazy videos, and other social

media chat rooms and platforms can cause spiritual harm to ourselves and others. Our sins can bring hurt and spiritual disruption to the lives of others.

Consider the man who has been addicted to pornography and when found out how his sin can negatively impact family life. Think of the pastor who has been caught surfing the Internet and is exposed. The dark side of the web can raise problems within families, parents, churches, and break a person's fellowship with God. Much Internet usage tends to increase secrecy and less communication with parents and others. It can cause a lack of service toward others. But more than anything else our sinful rebellion can cause harm, hurt, and hard times for other people. It's true that "the way of transgressors *is* hard" (Prov. 13:15) but so is the fallout of a person's addiction to sin. It can cause division, distrust, and other detrimental effects within churches, families, and the lives of friends.

The warnings against causing others to sin serve as a reminder of the interconnectedness of believers and the call to live lives that reflect the holiness and the love of God expressed toward others (1 Jn. 4:7-8).

The takeaway message from this study is to place God first and honor Him in all of your life – **both online and off!** Don't live in deception and denial (Heb. 3:13) regarding your cell phone habits.

- ✓ Have you been abusing your liberty and fooling yourself?
- ✓ In what ways can your cell phone cause someone else to stumble?
- ✓ Do you want to be responsible before God for leading someone else astray?
- ✓ How much time do you spend on the Internet?
- ✓ Have you developed wrong viewing habits?
- ✓ Are you enslaved to the dark web?
- ✓ Have you been listening to rock music and playing rock ringtones on your cell phone?
- ✓ Is God really being glorified in the way you use your cell phone?
- ✓ Have you become a spiritual stumbling block to others by what you post online?

Concluding Thoughts

In these technologically advanced times our cell phones, computers, and access to the Internet can be used for both good and evil, spreading the Gospel or sinful depravity, promoting light or darkness. Proverbs 15:3 declares: “The eyes of the LORD are in every place, beholding the evil and the good.” This means God sees every Internet website you visit, every mouse click that you make on your computer, every picture you look at, every post you have made, and every rock song you play. Because the Lord’s eyes are constantly surveilling our lives, we should desire to please Him (2 Tim. 2:4; Jn. 8:29) by carefully keeping our own eyes and ears from flirting with sin (1 Jn. 2:16).

In other words, we are to possess a healthy fear of God, reverencing God for His attribute of holiness and wanting to please Him by representing holy conduct that reflects godliness. The Bible says in 2 Corinthians 7:1, “**let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh** (actions related to the outward body) **and spirit** (aspirations related to inward desires), **perfecting holiness** (reaching the goal of consecrated living) **in the fear of God**” (reverencing God at all times and possessing a wholesome dread of not pleasing Him with our lives).



For example, I need to “**make a covenant with mine eyes**” (Job 31:1) and commit myself to purity and glorifying God (Col. 3:23) with my cell phone and Internet use. But the covenant does not only pertain to the eyes! “**Neither yield ye your members** (the members of your body – eyes, ears, nose, mouth, hands, feet, every part of your body) **as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God** (as your Lord and Master), **as those that are alive from the dead** (spiritually alive and sharing in Christ’s victory over sin), **and your members** (the members of your body) **as instruments of righteousness unto God**” (Rom 6:13).

We are to yield to God and therefore glorify God with our bodies which means to properly represent God’s righteous character and ways of holiness with all our cell phone activity. While mentally we might desire to

do all for God's glory, often we do not truly discipline ourselves to actively pursue this goal "and bring it (our body) into subjection" (1 Cor. 9:27) through God's power (Eph. 6:10), the Scriptures (Eph. 6:17), and accountability (Prov. 5).

Winston Churchill once said:

"I spent the first twenty-five years of my life wanting more freedom, and the next twenty-five years of my life wanting more structure, and the last twenty-five years of my life realizing that structure is freedom."

So we must learn the secret of disciplining our lives and find specific ways to glorify or honor God with our bodies through rejecting the dark side of the cyber world and building up our Christian character and conduct which reflects Christlikeness (2 Cor. 3:18; Gal. 4:19). The Internet provides situations that make it easier to compromise our standard of purity and holiness. This means we need discipline and must rely on God's provision of victory as we use the net.

- ✓ If your cell phone were food, how overweight would you be?
- ✓ Can I honestly say that God has been pleased with all my Internet activity?
- ✓ Is God's name being glorified or properly represented while I am using my cell phone?
- ✓ Do you need to make a covenant before God concerning your cell phone use?
- ✓ What have you been watching and listening to via the Internet?
- ✓ Are you ready to claim your victory in Christ and not be overcome by the cyber world?

Because of this study on cell phones, you might need to rethink the whole issue of how you have been using your cell phone. You might need to abruptly change your viewing habits and at the same time change your ringtone right now so God can be honored or glorified with your life and body (1 Cor. 6:19-20). The Scripture gives to us the way of victory during cyber warfare: "Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you" (Jam. 4:7 with 1 Pet. 5:9).



Since the web and cyber world opens us up to relationships and things which are unholy, we need obey the admonition (warning, reproof) of Psalm 1:1 noting the progression or downward spiral of compromise that we must avoid so we can experience God's true blessing and satisfaction in our Christian lives. **"Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly (CASUAL COMPROMISE – when we begin to listen to the worldly advice of others), nor standeth in the way of sinners (CONCENTRATED COMPROMISE - when we become more committed to following the sinful path), nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful"** (COMPLETE COMPROMISE – when we mock God and His holy way for our life).

Our downfall is often gradual but predictable! We compromise in steps. We take the advice of the ungodly, begin to follow them in their sinful acts of rebellion, and then finally turn on God and mock His perfect and holy will for our lives. God has called us to flee, follow, and fight instead of compromising with others within the cyber world. 1 Timothy 6:11 declared, "But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness." FLEE, FOLLOW, FIGHT! What part of this don't we understand?

Remember there comes a point when we get used to seeing and listening to evil and it no longer bothers us. In other words, we learn to tolerate it which the Bible forbids (Rev. 2:14-15, 20). But we cannot afford to become lackadaisical, desensitized, and tolerant toward sin. We must flee, follow after righteousness, and fight to win the war with the cyber world as we trust in God's delivering power! In Christ we are winners and conquerors (Rom. 8:37) – not losers!

Sometimes winning means putting safeguards or boundaries around our life. The Bible command Christians to "Come out from among them (unbelievers) and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean *thing*; and I



will receive you” (2 Cor. 6:17). It’s interesting that the word “separate” means “to mark off boundaries” which reminds us that the doctrine of Bible separation (“the doctrine which is according to godliness” – 1 Tim. 6:3) suggests making boundaries and surrounding our lives with safeguards. We need parameters around our lives if we are going to maintain purity and fellowship with God.

Here are some boundaries you can place around your life to help with your cell phone and Internet use.

- Make a chart to see how many hours you spend on the computer or cell phone on a daily basis. This would be outside your working hours.
- Choose a certain time in the evening when you will stop all online activities. Read books, do your homework, take a bike ride, spend time with the family, etc.
- Don’t take your cell phone into your bedroom at night. Leave it in an open area outside your room. Get an alarm clock to wake you up. The dark of the night is the time when the darkness of sin can overtake you! The Bible says, “Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness” (1 Thess. 5:5-6).
- All cell phones should be set aside when sharing an evening meal together with family.
- Use a good filter on your cell phone/computer. There are some good filters today that can be helpful to “make not provision for the flesh, to *fulfill* the lust *therefore*” (Rom. 13:14).
- Make your cell phone parent-accessible at all times. Accountability is important. Also, having a godly friend to keep tabs on your Internet sites (where you are going and what you are watching) is helpful. This can be done through shared software. Accountability partners can be very helpful especially if you have been addicted to porn.
- Place your computer in a central location that is accessible to everyone.
- Remember everything (the non-sinful things of life like technology) should be used in moderation, under God’s control, and not in excess (Gal. 5:22-23).

- Take an Internet fast for a period of time and see how addicted you might be to your cell phone and the web.
- Consider making the ultimate decision to get rid of the Internet and only have a cell phone for texting and calling. There is life outside the cyber world! If the web is a continual stumbling block in your life which you cannot control, take whatever action is necessary to eliminate the sin and stumbling block from your life. Yes, this might mean removing the Internet entirely by using a cell phone without web access.
- Separation is still the best policy when being overcome by sin and so we can obey the command to “neither be partaker of other men's sins: keep thyself pure” (1 Tim. 5:22). Remember that you can still live in the 21st century without access to the Internet.

BOTTOM LINE

Here is the bottom line. When we enter the cyber world, we must *decide* to yield our bodies to God (Rom. 6:12-13), while at the same time *demolishing* the sinful thoughts in our mind (2 Cor. 10:5) and then *direct* our thoughts with truth (Eph. 6:14, 17; Jn. 8:32). All of this can be accomplished when possessing faith in God's provision, power, and promises (“the shield of faith” - Eph. 6:16). Faith is still the victory! It gives us victory over the cyber world.

Psalm 11:3 asks, “If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?” This means we are to grow a godly foundation in our homes and personal lives by cultivating a relationship with Christ and our family – not with social media. Many Christians are “living online” instead of living for Christ (“For to me to live is Christ” – Phil. 1:21).

Galatians 2:20 should be the life verse of every Christian:

“I am crucified with Christ (the old person I used to be under sin's slavery has died with Christ): **nevertheless I live; yet not I** (self is no longer on the throne), **but Christ liveth in me** (to grant me victory and meaning in life):

and the life which I now live in the flesh (this body) I live by the faith of the Son of God (trusting in His resurrection power for victory), **who loved me, and gave himself for me**” (remembering His death on my behalf motivates me to live for Him – Heb. 12:2).

What is the takeaway? Don’t live your life based on untrustworthy feelings but facts and faith rooted in your loving, dynamic, and liberating relationship with Christ. This is because faith is the victory over the cyber world (“and this is the victory that overcometh the world, *even* our faith” - 1 Jn. 5:4). Remember that Christ has given you the victory and you should possess a dynamic and growing relationship with Him as the risen Lord (Phi. 3:10). Cell phones and the cyber world should never replace our walk, relationship, and commitment to Christ who said in Luke 9:23, **“If any man will come after me, let him deny himself** (SURRENDER – deny oneself of self and sins), **and take up his cross daily** (SACRIFICE one’s life for Christ), **and follow me**” (STEADFASTNESS - to be Christ’s disciple).

Here is the final challenge and call to Christians. Are you willing to change that tune? Are you ready to stop surfing the dark web and being controlled by licentiousness and lust? Are you going to make the commitment to cut yourself off from surfing the Internet to gain the victory you need? Are you committed to limiting your time on your cell phone and invest more time in the King’s business, redeeming the time and serving the Lord (Rom. 12:11), witnessing, and spending time with Him in His Word?

Remember that the Devil is doing all that he can to keep us from God’s Word (Matt. 13:19). God wants each one of us to sit at the feet of Jesus (Lk. 10:39) without our cell phones, texting, searching, blogging, etc. Mary sitting at the feet of Jesus and listening to Christ’s Word reminds us that we should not be constantly multitasking. We need to get off of our cell phones and listen to God speak to our hearts. “Speak, LORD; for thy servant heareth” (1 Sam. 3:9). And what is the primary thing that God is saying to us today? “Be still, and know that I am God” (Ps. 46:10). This means we need to limit and sometimes stop our cell phone activity so we can get to know God better, His person, presence, and providential working in our lives.

- ✓ Who do you really want to please – self or Christ?
- ✓ Are you ready to make some changes with your cell phone habits?
- ✓ How close are you to God?
- ✓ Has the web taken you away from your prayer time?
- ✓ Are you growing in your walk and relationship with Christ?
- ✓ Have you been allowing Christ to speak to you through the Scriptures?
- ✓ Are you ready to make the decision to walk and fellowship with the Lord and leave behind your enslavement to the cyber world?

James 4:8 gives us an ultimatum:

“Draw nigh (*near*) to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded.”

This Bible verse reminds us that cleansing or the forgiveness of sin precedes fellowship with God. This means if you want to be close to the Lord, you need to confess your sins (1 Jn. 1:9), detox yourself from cell phone abuse, and clean up your life from bad cell phone habits. If you get right with God, you can then be close to God again and fellowship with Him (“one with another” - 1 Jn. 1:7). Don’t allow your cell phone to dampen your relationship and walk with God. **Life is too short to miss the real thing!**

Psalm 139:23-24 is a heartfelt confession related to our cell phone use:

“Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: 24 And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.”

Beth Moore has written a revised 23rd Psalm dealing with cell phones. We might view this poem as **iPsalm 23**. It reveals the diversions that cell phones can bring into the lives of Christians which take them away from the Great Shepherd of their soul and service for Him.

iPsalm 23

“The cellphone is my shepherd, my spiritual growth shall want.

It maketh me to sit down to do nothing for His name’s sake,
Because it requireth all my spare time.

It keepeth me from doing my duty as a Christian,
Because it presenteth so many good videos that I must see.
It restoreth my knowledge of the things of the world,
And keepeth me from the study of God's word.
It leadeth me in the paths of wasting my time,
And in doing nothing for the Kingdom of God.

Yea, though I lose all my real friendships,
I shall keep on spending time on my cellphone, as long as it is charged,
For it is my closest companion.
Its sounds and its pictures, they comfort me.

It presenteth entertainment before me,
And keepeth me from doing important things with my family.
It fills my head with ideas which differ
From those set forth in the Word of God.

Surely, no good thing will come of my life,
Because my cellphone offereth me no good time to do the will of God;
Thus, I will dwell in spiritual poverty all the days of my life."

