

WISE LIVING IN A SMART AGE

SERIES GUIDEBOOK

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HOW TO USE THIS GUIDEBOOK

This book is like a map. Well, first, do you know what a map is? I'm not talking about the navigation system inside your phone, the one that tells you where to go with an eerie, disembodied voice.

We're talking about a *map* map. The thing made of paper that folds up correctly only after you whisper the secret spell over it.

You *study* a map. You ask yourself questions. You get your mind ready for the challenge of being in the "real world" that the map represents. You write notes on it. You keep it handy (there's no Wi-Fi in the mountains). Cool people even frame maps on their office walls.

All of this applies to your **REFRESH** series guidebook (except for the framing thing). So, here's the plan for the next five weeks:

1. Listen to the sermons. All of the sermons from the **REFRESH** series can be found at summitview.com/sermons.
2. Read each week's reflections. These short readings summarize that week's sermon and introduce a few others thoughts.
3. Ask yourself (and others) hard questions. The discussion questions at the end of each section are for personal or group use.
4. Challenge yourself. At the end of each section, there's a tech-related challenge that will help you put your newfound understanding into action.
5. Resource yourself. A five-week series on technology and wisdom will be far from exhaustive. Check out the recommended resources at the end of each section and at summitview.com/refresh.

Here's to wise living.



HUMBLE BEGINNINGS

Part 1: A Theology of Technology

Before we ask, “How do I wisely use my iPhone?” we must first ask, “Why is there an iPhone?”

There’s an iPhone—and all other kinds of technological devices—because humans were made to make stuff.

The first two chapters of Genesis reveal God’s intentions for the creatures made in his image: to be rulers, stewards and shapers of the created order. Adam was tasked with the work of caring for the Garden, of naming the animals, of taking the goodness of God’s creation and making more of that goodness.

[Read Genesis 1-3](#)

So it is with all humans. We were put on earth to create, just like our Daddy. To garden. To

bring out all of the latent possibility of the raw creation.

Think of it this way: Apples are good, but apple pie is very good.

This means that work is deeply, inherently good. It is through our work that God cares for and blesses his creation and our neighbors.

This means that culture—paintings, music, apple pies—is what human beings are supposed to make of the world. It's what God wants us to do. We are all creatives—from the stay-at-home mom to the professional musician.

**“We were put on earth . . .
to bring out all of the
latent possibility of the
raw creation.”**

With this view, we can see that smartphones are, in one sense, a good thing. They showcase the remarkable ingenuity of God's image-bearers. They're a technological marvel.

But because of the fall, because of sin, even our most marvelous achievements can be frustrated by weeds. A sense of alienation warps our relationships. In a fallen world, work can often be futile and selfish, and our desire for human connection can be undone by our technology—by our very attempts at bearing God's image.

Resources for Further Reflection

- Listen to the first sermon of the **REFRESH** series at summitview.com/sermons
- Listen to season 1 and Season 3 of the All Things New Podcast at summitview.com/podcast
- Check out these books:
 - *Every Good Endeavor* by Tim Keller
 - *Culture Making* by Andy Crouch

Questions for Discussion

1. Describe your own journey when it comes to technology. Are you an early adopter? More cautious? What have you appreciated? What has concerned or irritated you?
2. How well can you connect your work—in the office, at home, in the classroom—to God's work in the world?
3. What are the differences between *tools* and *technology*?
4. Consider a specific piece of technology. This could be a smartphone or an app on your smartphone. Ask yourself:
 - What problem is this new technology purporting to solve?
 - Is that really a problem?

- What new problems will present themselves as a result of this initial problem being solved?
- What does this piece of technology make possible?
- What does this piece of technology make impossible?

Challenge: Creation Audit

With members of your family or small group, commit to doing a “creation” audit.

Do you spend more time *creating* things (pies, art for the refrigerator, a patch of dirt underneath the swing) or *consuming* things (Netflix originals, Spotify playlists, images on Instagram)?

Track your time, share your results with others, and pray for wisdom and discernment about possible changes in your life.

Part 2: A Call to Wisdom

Living wisely in a smart age begins with gaining clarity about what wisdom is.

Very simply, wisdom is understanding that guides action.¹ It's more than knowledge; it's more than just morality. It involves humility and discernment.

“Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, making the best use of the time, because the days are evil.”

EPHESIANS 5:15-16

But how, you might ask, does one get understanding?

You can't acquire understanding by asking Alexa, so this is where a definition of wisdom starts to take on some nuance. While keeping in mind our simple working definition above, let's take a deeper dive into the dynamic nature of wisdom.

Wisdom Is a Person

For most Christians, when we think of “wisdom,” we think of the book of Proverbs. But it's more accurate to see Proverbs (and all the

1. Andy Crouch. *The Tech-Wise Family: Everyday Steps for Putting Technology in Its Proper Place*. Baker Books, 2017.

other books of the Bible) as a “chapter” in a much larger story about God’s plan to redeem his creation through the saving work of his Son, Jesus. The whole story points to Jesus, and Jesus makes sense of the whole story.

In this view, wisdom is not some abstract, mysterious element that we stumble upon by chance. Jesus *is* the wisdom of God (1 Corinthians 1:24, 30). “. . . all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge” are hidden in him (Colossians 2:3). He is the source of ultimate wisdom (Luke 11:31) and the personification of wisdom (Proverbs 8:22-31, John 1:1-4). He is the One who gives understanding (2 Timothy 2:7).

And all of this is available through a personal relationship with Jesus, made possible by his grace and justifying work on our behalf.

Wisdom begins with the good news that your Creator loves you.

“So true wisdom is not a set of principles but a supernatural person. And we receive this wisdom not simply through acts of the will but through the transformation of our heart and desires by worshipping [Jesus].”

TIM KELLER²

2. Tim Keller. *God's Wisdom for Navigating Life: A Year of Daily Devotions in the Book of Proverbs*. Penguin Random House, 2017.

The Beginning of Wisdom

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; all those who practice it have a good understanding.

PSALM 110:10

“Wisdom begins with a right understanding of our place before God.”

Wisdom begins with humility, which means that wisdom begins with a right understanding of our place before God. To fear God means to be in awe-struck wonder of him. He’s the Creator—the source of all truth, goodness and beauty.

This has direct implications as we search for understanding in how to use technology. First, humility leads us to an honest assessment of our hearts—John Calvin called them “idol factories.” When we take a posture of humility before God in this area of our lives, he will help us see weaknesses that technology tends to expose.

Secondly, humility reminds us that we are *limited*. Technology can very easily give us the illusion that we can do more than we actually can. We’re constantly “multi-tasking,”

but what we're really doing is running ragged switching back-and-forth between tasks.

Jesus doesn't want us to be exhausted. He wants us to be wise, humble and rested.

Let's humble ourselves over the next four weeks. With open hands, let's ask God to focus our attention on the condition of our souls, to illuminate our vulnerabilities in his healing light.

“Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for ‘God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.’”

1 PETER 5:5

Prayer

God, I give you the next four weeks with no strings attached. Expose me. Lead me. Change me. Root anything out of my life that needs to be replaced by more of you.

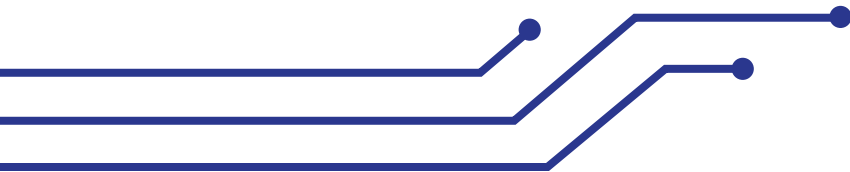
Questions for Discussion

1. Wisdom rests on humility, and humility means recognizing your weaknesses and vulnerabilities. In what ways might technology amplify or feed on weaknesses in your life? What insecurities are drawn out?
2. In what ways do you use technology aimlessly or unproductively?
3. Do you like the way you spend your days? Are you working out your salvation “with fear and trembling” (Philippians 2:12)?
4. In what area(s) of your life do feel wise? In what area(s) of your life do you need to grow in wisdom?

Resources for Further Reflection

- Listen to the first sermon of the **REFRESH** series at summitview.com/sermons
- Books:
 - *The Tech-Wise Family* by Andy Crouch
 - *God's Wisdom for Navigating Life* by Tim Keller
- Blog post: "I, Phone: Love and Addiction in the Age of Distraction" by Trevor Sides

Find all the resources mentioned in this week's reading at summitview.com/refresh.





HOW THE INTERNET WORKS

PART 1: ZEROES AND ONES

The internet is ubiquitous, and learning how it works can help us understand how to use it to serve others to glorify God.

The term “internet” refers to the collection of connections between computers around the world. Much like a fishing net, these connections overlap and create a large network. This network is considered “decentralized” because no one person or entity can control it. Each connection point is a personal computer, server (large storage computer), or personal device, which are connected through wired or wireless signals. When you pay for internet service, you are paying for a connection point to talk to other computers.

Everything on the internet, then, is actually sitting on a computer somewhere in the world. The internet allows you access to what you need on someone else’s computer (or server). For example, when you send an email, your email provider stores it on a computer until the recipient requests access to it from their computer.

When two computers send information between them, that information is broken up into small parts called packages. Packages are translated into a series of zeros and ones called binary code (10010001011110). Once the packages reach their destination, they are reassembled to the original form. Going back to the email example, this means that each email you send is broken into smaller parts of zeros and ones and stored on your email provider’s server until it is accessed and reassembled so that someone can read it.

Check out part 2 on page page 21.



2 YOUR ATTENTION, PLEASE

“Again he sent other servants, saying, ‘Tell those who are invited, See, I have prepared my dinner, my oxen and my fat calves have been slaughtered, and everything is ready. Come to the wedding feast.’ **But they paid no attention** and went off, one to his farm, another to his business . . .”

— Jesus, Matthew 22:4-5 (emphasis added)

Now as they went on their way, Jesus entered a village. And a woman named Martha welcomed him into her house. And she had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord’s feet and listened to his teaching. **But Martha was distracted** with much serving.

— Luke 10:38-40 (emphasis added)

In *The Tech-Wise Family*, Andy Crouch argues that technologies like the smartphone are wonderful at displaying the creative

capacities of humans, but they are not so wonderful at *forming* those creative capacities.¹

What, then, is the smartphone to form in us, with all of its glittering, dopamine-laced apps?

The argument could be made for *connectivity*, that the smartphone forms in us a desire and capacity for connection.

Yet in our constant search for connection, we get distracted.

And distraction leads to lethargy about the *why* of life.

We're pulled in so many different directions that we end up going nowhere. In this state, we are losing our ability to pay attention to the people, callings and responsibilities God has put in our lives. Nor can we sustain the focus to meditate on God's Word and the life-giving clarity of the gospel.

1. Andy Crouch. *The Tech-Wise Family: Everyday Steps for Putting Technology in Its Proper Place*. Baker Books, 2017.

2. R.J. Snell. *Acedia and Its Discontents: Metaphysical Boredom in an Empire of Desire*. Angelico Press, April 2015. Quoted in Karen Swallow Prior, "Delight in the Good" (First Things, September 22, 2016)

ARE YOU SLOTHFUL?

Acedia. It's an old word, unfamiliar to us sophisticated moderns. The word literally means "without care," but in English it's usually translated as "slothful." To be slothful can mean inactive, but it can also include purposeless activity, like browsing Pinterest when you know you ought to be doing the dishes, tagging your location in a selfie when you should be enjoying your spouse on date night.

When in a slothful state, one "abhors what God has given, namely, reality and its limits of order," and your demeanor is characterized by "frustration and hate, disgust at place and 'life itself.'"² Acedia robs us of attention—our care for ourselves and others—and makes us numb to the affections and motivations that should propel our life.

Giving your full attention to the people and places closest to you is an act of love. We cannot love if we cannot be free from distraction (Colossians 3:12-17) and choose the good portion (Luke 10:42).

“The smartphone has abolished boredom. But think about what this means. It does not mean that the smartphone has given us a sense of purpose and peace. It does not mean that the smartphone cultivates mindfulness, meditation, or contemplation, or that it provides focus, insight, patience, and joy. . . . It is more likely to dissipate and disturb attention than collect and clarify it. The cell phone is a device of distraction.”

JOSHUA P. HOCHSCHILD³

“To pay attention, this is our endless and proper work.”

MARY OLIVER

“Focus is an act of bravery.”

TODD HENRY⁴

3. Joshua P. Hochschild. “How to Look at a Tree.” *First Things*, June 2017.

4. Todd Henry, *Herding Tigers: Be the Leader That Creative People Need* (Portfolio, 2018)

Questions for Discussion

1. Consider your technology habits and usage. When are you most distracted by things like your smartphone? How often are you distracted from the people and things that matter most to you?
2. What's one simple thing you can do to be more *present* with your spouse, children, friends or acquaintances?
3. What is to be gained by paying attention to the physical world around you—the sky, the trees, the sounds of traffic or birds?
4. Why is it so hard to be silent or to practice silence?
5. What are one or two ways you can practice being silent?

Challenge: Wait with Purpose

“We carry in our pockets the possibility of unceasing jolts of novelty.”⁵ Waiting is a thing of the past. Which sounds nice, but as a people who are called to wait for the Lord *now* (Psalm 27:14, 33:20) and for his return *later* (Revelation 22:20), waiting is a crucial practice for Christians.

5. James K.A. Smith. “In Praise of Boredom.” *Image Journal*, Issue 99.

This challenge has two components:

1. Together with members of your family or small group, commit to waiting with purpose: No phones while you wait.⁶ For the light to change. For your number to be called at the DMV. To see the dentist. To check out at the grocery store.

Instead of giving your thumbs a workout, how can you wait with purpose? (Pro-tip: “Just sitting there with your thoughts and doing nothing” is an acceptable response.)

Action step: Check out a list of “waiting ideas” at summitview.com/refresh.

2. Fight distraction with technology! (Ironic, we know.)

There are many useful apps that can help you track your usage *and* set limits on when you can access your phone or certain sites/apps.

Action step: Check out our focus-enhancing app recommendations at summitview.com/refresh.

“Guard well your spare moments. They are like uncut diamonds. Discard them and their value will never be known. Improve them and they will become the brightened gems in a useful life.”

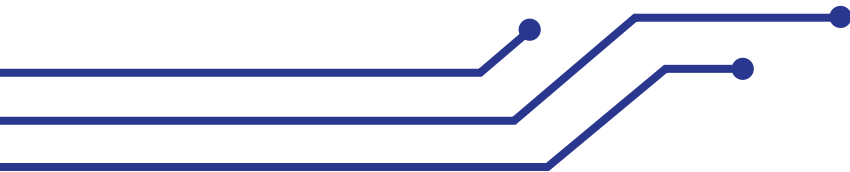
RALPH WALDO EMERSON

6. This idea was inspired by The Common Rule’s Advent Edition, thecommonrule.org

Resources for Further Reflection

- Listen to the second sermon of the **REFRESH** series at summitview.com/sermons
- Practice waiting well with our “waiting ideas” at summitview.com/refresh
- Books:
 - *12 Ways Your Phone Is Changing You* by Tony Reinke
- Online articles:
 - “Delight in the Good” by Karen Swallow Prior
 - “Reclaim Your Attention” by Akshay Kapur
 - “Can Your Soul Really Survive Social Media?” by Russell Moore

Find all the resources mentioned in this week’s reading at summitview.com/refresh.





HOW THE INTERNET WORKS

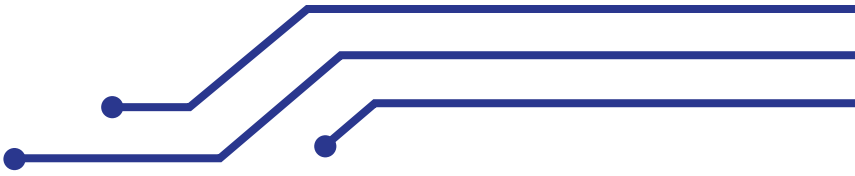
PART 2: SECURITY + PRIVACY

Everything on the internet is sitting on a computer somewhere in the world. When information is sent in packages (zeros and ones), sometimes part or all of that package is intercepted (or altered), thus making your information no longer private.

Many companies have put safeguards in place to protect the privacy and security of our data, but nothing on the internet is foolproof. Passwords and encryption are important because they restrict access to certain parts of the internet.

Learn more about keeping your family's web usage safe and private at staysafe.org/teens. Consider implementing an internet filter like OpenDNS.

Check out part 3 on page page 28.



3 ALONE TOGETHER

. . . remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, **alienated** from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world.

— Ephesians 2:12, (emphasis added)

No . . . it isn't that I want to be alone,
But that everybody's alone—or so it seems to me.

They make noises, and think they are talking to each other;

They make faces, and think they understand each other.

And I'm sure that they don't.¹

We do plenty of (justified) hand-wringing over the effects smartphones, video games and social media have on our abili-

1. T.S. Eliot. *The Complete Poems and Plays 1909-1950*. Harcourt, Brace, New York, 1952

ty to connect with other humans and be in relationship.

But we've felt estranged for a long time. Ever since Eden, we've been hiding from God and blaming each other. Facebook was invented long after the Apostle Paul was inspired by the Holy Spirit to write his letter to the church in Ephesus. T.S. Eliot was writing plays about our inherent loneliness before Tinder was a thing.

All humans are born alienated from God. It's a miracle of God's common grace that we're able to be in meaningful relationships at all.

And yet...

When we rely on Amazon to deliver our groceries, we reinforce our self-enclosed and self-sufficient cravings.

When we keep tabs on our thousands of "friends" from the disembodied comfort of a news feed, we lack the motivation to gather face-to-face for coffee or encouragement.

When the latest controversy hits Twitter, it's all too easy to circle the wagons in a vilifying, us-vs-them outrage instead of seeking genuine conversation and seeing the "other side" as humans made in the image of God.

When your kids are clamoring for your attention, that new video from your favorite paleo blogger is just too enthralling to put down.

When your SnapStreak hits new highs, you shudder at the thought of pursuing a more “analog adolescence.”²

... I am pretty certain
that without shared
social devotion one’s
solitary experiences of
God wither into a form
of withholding, spiritual
stinginess, the light of
Christ growing ever
fainter in the glooms
of self.”³

CHRISTIAN WIMAN

When the porn is so plentiful, there’s little need to romance your spouse or seek out the flesh-and-bone intimacy of marriage or, for the celibate, to be satisfied by the love of God (Psalm 90:14).

Against all this, the incarnation of Christ compels us to embodied and relational ways of living. Reconciliation is possible;

connection can overcome alienation. But to love one another (John 13:34) first means that we have to be *physically* present with one another. This is central to our humanity.

Anything less is a gnostic emoji.

2. Jean M. Twenge. “Have Smartphones Destroyed a Generation?” *The Atlantic*, September 2017.

3. Christian Wiman. *My Bright Abyss: Meditation of a Modern Believer*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2013.

Questions for Discussion

1. It doesn't matter if you're single, married, or married with kids, we can all struggle with loneliness. What do these struggles look like for you at this point in your life?
2. How do our technologies (including virtual reality and artificial intelligence) promise connection but fail to deliver on that promise? When have you experienced this in your own life? (Hint: As you ponder your response, recall the questions in Week 1 about the possibilities/impossibilities embedded within new technologies.)
3. Read Colossians 3:1-17, noting the different characteristics of loving relationships. In what ways can our modern communication technologies either enhance or detract from those characteristics?
 - For example: If you're a parent, think about *your* tech usage in front of your kids, not just your children's tech usage.
 - Another example: If you often find yourself in "debates" on social media, evaluate the fruitfulness of these interactions in light of Colossians 3:1-17.

Challenge: Be Face-to-face

Deep, life-giving relationships don't just happen. They require grace and intentionality.

This week's challenge might be scarier than it reads on paper, but here it is:

Identify a couple of people with whom you'd like to develop a thicker friendship and set up a recurring time to meet.

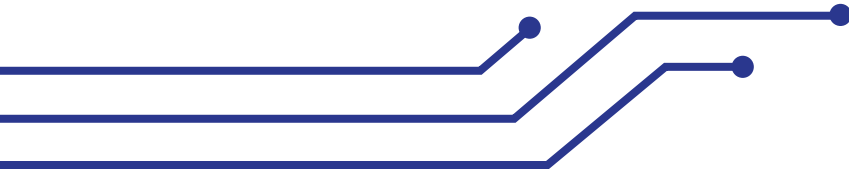
Commit to it. Pray for God's grace.

And lean into the uncomfortable yet wonderful proximity of being face-to-face with another Image Bearer.

Resources for Further Reflection

- Listen to the third sermon of the **REFRESH** series at summitview.com/sermons
- Books:
 - *Reclaiming Conversation* by Sherry Turkle
 - *The Art of Neighboring* by Jay Pathak and Dave Runyon
- Online articles:
 - “Making New Friends Is Hard but Jesus Is Good” by Tina Wilson
 - “The Covington Scissor” by Ross Douthat
 - “The Wise Do Not Always Weigh In” by Chris Nye

Find all the resources mentioned in this week's reading at summitview.com/refresh.





HOW THE INTERNET WORKS

PART 3: EYEBALLS AND DOLLAR BILLS

The main way of making money on the internet is through advertisements, meaning much of the internet is designed to sell you something. For example, Google stores all of its information on large servers, including your search information, emails and other data to market ads to you. Google is very efficient at this, and many smaller companies hire Google to advertise for them. For Google, their “product” isn’t necessarily Search or Gmail. It’s us and our data; it’s the ability to advertise to us. We are what they sell.

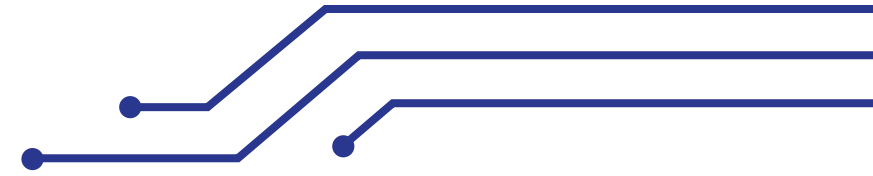
The same thing is true of social media. “Free” social media channels such as Instagram and Facebook make their revenue from advertising. Ads are picked specifically to match your tastes.

Social media is actually designed to keep you hooked so that advertisers can make a profit. To keep you hooked, social media feeds rely on easily digestible content that satisfy you for a moment but don’t provide any lasting fulfillment. It’s akin to going to the library to pick up a good book, but the librarian knows it’s better for the library if you come back more often. So instead of recommending *Brothers Karamazov* or *Crime and Punishment*, she hands you a *People* magazine, and you walk away feeling good because you “read” something.

Facebook’s algorithm has been fine-tuned to show content you will share, react to and comment on. The more you interact with that content, the more Facebook can tailor adver-

tisements to your liking. The truth is, we are more likely to share, react to and comment on content that is sensational, shallow and flashy. We get stuck in a loop of junk content. Social media channels—and many internet sites—are less concerned with the human on the other side of the computer than with making a profit. It's a dehumanizing system, scaled to global proportions.

Check out part 4 on page page 36.



4

GOD IN THE WHIRLWIND

To assess how technology is strengthening, weakening or stagnating your relationship with God is to assess your relationship with God. Full stop.

Fear and trembling are required here. So, too, are joy and praise and gratitude. We are not talking about some hypothetical thing, some impersonal idea. We are talking about the Beginning and the End of your life, of the life of the world. As Christian Wiman put it, “. . . Christ is not an answer to existence, but a means of existing.”¹

Maybe a better question would be, “How are you existing in Christ? Is easy-everywhere technology interfering with that existence or invigorating that existence?”

1. Christian Wiman. *My Bright Abyss: Meditation of a Modern Believer*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, New York, 2013.

This existing is sustained largely through the Bible. God communicates to us primarily through his written word, and, spoiler alert, it doesn't read like a BuzzFeed listicle or the dozens of memes you scrolled past today.

To live in and through God, by means of his word, requires silence and patience. To meditate, ruminate, contemplate—these can't happen in a rush out the door, amidst a flurry of notifications about your latest Instagram masterpiece.

Existing in Silence

For God alone my soul waits in
silence; from him comes
my salvation.

(PSALM 62:1)

“Silence is the language of faith.
Action . . . is the translation.”

(CHRISTIAN WIMAN)²

Spotify. Hulu. Netflix. Apple Podcasts. XM Radio. YouTube. Text messages. Notifications. We exist in a noisy, interrupted world. But it is God who “richly provides us with everything to enjoy” (1 Timothy 6:17), and that enjoyment begins with focused stillness before him.

2. Christian Wiman. *My Bright Abyss: Meditation of a Modern Believer*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, New York, 2013.

Existing in a Long Obedience in the Same Direction

“Through a long path and a lot of work . . . we develop integrity and righteousness and it is through these character traits that God guides us.”

(TIM KELLER)³

**It’s hard enough to
develop intimacy
and constancy
in our human
relationships; why
would we think
otherwise with God?**

Our modern communication technologies condition us to be slaves to instant gratification. With God, there is gratification, but it is rarely instant.

We’re dealing with the Creator and King of the universe, after all. It’s hard enough to develop intimacy and constancy in our human relationships; why would we think otherwise with *God*?

Do you love him? Are you willing to walk with him on the long road of this life? Is he enough?

Dulled by 4K

Perhaps our trouble with being still and being patient stems from the deluge of stimuli

3. Tim Keller. *God’s Wisdom for Navigating Life: A Year of Daily Devotions in the Book of Proverbs*. Penguin Random House, 2017.

we submit ourselves to on a daily basis.

Here's an amazing video of a guy doing something nice for a stranger. Here's a video shot in 4K of some natural wonder that you'll never visit in your life. Here's a video of a fox hunting a rabbit in the snow.

Some of it is truly amazing! What a world God has made for us!

But it overwhelms us to the point where maybe, just maybe, we're starting to lose our sense of wonder in the person of Jesus and his beauty, which fills all corners of the globe.

“... wonder is the precondition for all wisdom.”⁴

CHRISTIAN WIMAN

“Correctly then is this world called the mirror of divinity; not that there is sufficient clearness for man to gain a full knowledge of God, by looking at the world, but . . . the faithful, to whom he has given eyes, see sparks of his glory, as it were, glittering in every created thing. The world was no doubt made, that it might be the theater of divine glory.”

JOHN CALVIN⁵

4. Christian Wiman. *My Bright Abyss: Meditation of a Modern Believer*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, New York, 2013.

5. John Calvin, *Commentaries*.

Questions for Discussion

1. Why does God love you?
2. In what ways is God silent toward you? In what ways is he not silent toward you?
3. What habits are interfering with your relationship with God? What habits could you begin to work on to replace those unhealthy habits?
4. Recall a time when you were in a silent space for an extended amount of time. How did you feel? What did you notice about your thoughts and the state of your inner self?

Challenge: Seek Solitude

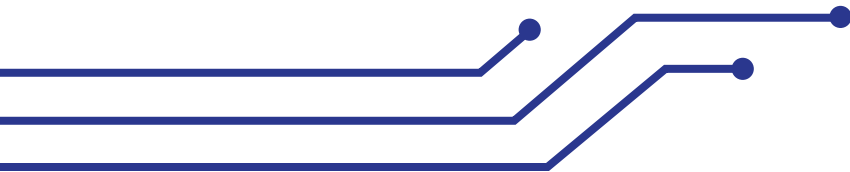
You don't have to build a fortress of it like Superman, but this week's challenge is about getting you in a Psalm 62:1 type of environment. Here's the challenge:

Schedule (and keep!) an extended time away with God where you know silence will be a given and solitude will not be hard to find. This can take many forms. If you've never done it before, take a small, first step, like an hour on a weekday morning before work, or a couple hours on a Saturday morning. Whatever you plan, plan it prayerfully, give yourself grace and lean into the awkwardness of the stillness. You'll be surprised by what you hear.

Resources for Further Reflection

- Listen to the fourth sermon of the **REFRESH** series at summitview.com/sermons
- Check out our tips on what to take on your extended time with God at summitview.com/refresh
- Books:
 - *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life* by Donald S. Whitney
 - *A Hunger for God* by John Piper
 - *The Pleasures of Reading in an Age of Distraction* by Alan Jacobs

Find all the resources mentioned in this week's reading at summitview.com/refresh.





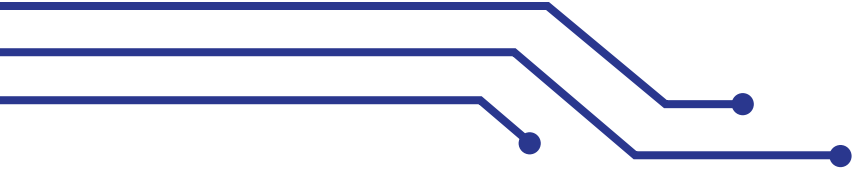
HOW THE INTERNET WORKS

PART 4: SOCIAL MANIPULATION

Can social media manipulate your emotions? Well, yes. Facebook recently did a study on whether or not their news feed could affect the mood of a user's posts.¹ They altered their algorithm to show some people more neutral to *positive* posts, and others more neutral to *negative* posts. Users who were shown positive content were more likely to post their own positive content. Users who were shown negative content were more likely to post their own negative content.

Not only is this unethical, but it's also disconcerting. If Facebook decides that you look at social media more often when you're depressed, it has no qualms about changing your news feed to show more negative content to keep you coming back.

1. Katy Waldman. "Facebook's Unethical Experiment." Slate.com. June 28, 2014.



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WHERE WE GO FROM HERE

You have humbled yourself and asked for wisdom. You have evaluated your relationship with technology. You have evaluated technology's impact on your relationships with others. You have evaluated technology's impact on your relationship with God.

So, what's next, besides playing Fortnite for 12 hours straight now that this oppressive series is finally finished?

Glad you asked.

1. Encourage One Another

After a series like this, it's going to be hard to implement changes in your life, and it will be equally as challenging to do so without silently judging those who don't make changes that look like yours.

Here is how we, as a spiritual family, as the *first* family, can encourage each other in the days and weeks to come.

- 1. Delight in God.** Any changes that you/your family consider ought to done to please him first. Not the other people in your small group. Not your spouse. Not your future spouse. This is all for him; it's a means to be more like him.
- 2. Be OK with being different.** Don't be surprised when your technology convictions leave you feeling like the weirdo at your kid's soccer practice. Jesus' people are called to be present *and* distinct, and while distinction is hard, it isn't bad. We're to be salt and light. Yes, we will be odd, but, by God's grace, our lives—and our counter-cultural way of making culture—will be attractive and compelling to our unsaved neighbors.
- 3. Support one another.** This may sound tautological, but one big way to encourage one another is to actually do that. We are a family. We support one another when making hard decisions for the advancement of God's kingdom. Let's spur one another on to love and good works (Hebrews 10:24-25).

Jesus' people are called to be present *and* distinct, and while distinction is hard, it isn't bad.

2. Repeat What's Worth Repeating

In Proverbs 1:1-6, Solomon uses other words besides “wisdom” to help us see what it means to live wisely.

Discipline. Discernment. Discretion.¹

These are virtues. Virtues are formed through practice. How do you become wise? By practicing.

“All habits and practices are ultimately trying to make us into a certain kind of person. So one of the most important questions we need to ask is: Just what kind of person is this habit or practice trying to produce, and to what end is such a practice aimed?”

JAMES K.A. SMITH²

Yes, we’re talking about practice. And this is the power of habit: you get what you repeat. Wisdom, then, helps us identify what’s worth repeating—which is the “how” of our walk in Ephesians 5:15.

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1. Tim Keller. *God's Wisdom for Navigating Life: A Year of Daily Devotions in the Book of Proverbs*. Penguin Random House, 2017
 2. James K.A. Smith. *Desiring the Kingdom: Worship, Worldview, and Cultural Formation*. Baker Academic, 2009.

The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom (Proverbs 9:10). In other words, the awe and wonder of God's great love is the source of wisdom, the motivation for our habits and the well of joy and gratitude by which we live for the One who died for us.

Let's practice these things together. We get what we repeat.

3. Put It All Together

Per usual, on the next pages, you will find one last set of discussion questions and a tech-related challenge.

After engaging with the questions and challenge, there is space dedicated for you to process what changes you think God is calling you to make.

Questions for Discussion

1. What does it mean to have *character*?
How is it formed?
2. Which do you think is more true to reality: that your desires and imagination shape your habits, or that your habits inform your ultimate loves and values?
3. What's one way you can show others and yourself grace as we work out new patterns and habits in our lives?

Challenge: Track Your Habits

Are you aware of all the habits (big or little) that you do throughout a given day? Probably not. With members of your family or small group, commit to tracking and assessing your daily habits.

Share your results with others. What did you learn about yourself? What did you learn about where you spend time and money? What direction in life are your habits taking you?

You can find a helpful guide for tracking your habits at jamesclear.com/habits-scorecard.

Putting It All Together

What patterns, habits, and commitments do you want to make going forward—in your life, in your relationships with others, in your relationship with God?

Be thoughtful. Be prayerful. Consider this an act of worship before God.

Tech and Me

What habits and patterns do you need to repent of?

What habits and patterns concerning your personal technology usage do you want to commit to form?

What else has come to mind as you've evaluated your personal technology habits?

Tech and Others

What technology-related habits and patterns have negatively affected your connection with others?

What technology-related habits and patterns do you want to commit to form for the sake of stronger relationships?

What else has come to mind as you've evaluated your relationships?

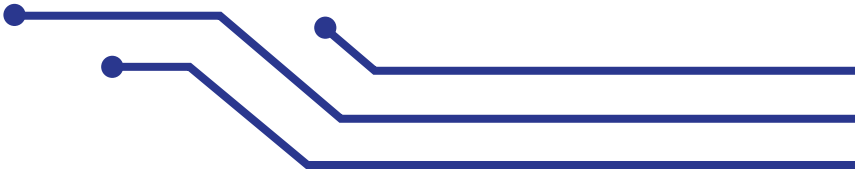
Tech and God

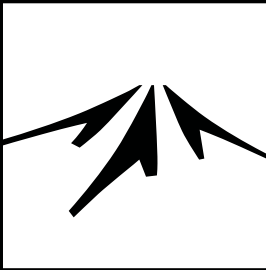
What technology-related habits and patterns have interfered with your relationship with God?

What God-oriented life patterns (fasting, Sabbath, etc.) do you want to commit to and pursue on a regular basis?

What else has come to mind as you've reflected on your ability to delight in God?

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