

// Parent Ministry

Managing Your Family's High-Tech Habits

Authors: Arnie Cole, Pam Ovwigho, Michael Ross

REVIEW:

Managing Your Family's High-Tech Habit is a helpful resource that marries the best of God's Word with the latest research in order to help families break the technology addiction that is plaguing so many homes. This book includes practical help, a self-evaluation, and straight-forward advice. It covers a wide variety of topics while also bringing it all back the spiritual heart of the matter, God's word. It is a great tool for families, churches, and pastors.

SNAPSHOT

Hashtag Help: Cluing in to our Electronic Addiction

A quick look at the statistics reveals the growing trend of media and technology addiction. Whether is it cellphones, social media, the internet or video games in their various forms, families are caught in cycles of addiction. Stepping back and looking at the whole picture, parents can use the same 9 criteria used for other addictions to assess addiction and compulsive high-tech behavior in their home: 1.) *Preoccupation* 2.) *Withdrawal* 3.) *Tolerance* 4.) *Failure to Stop* 5.) *Giving up other activities* 6.) *Continuing despite problems* 7.) *Deception* 8.) *Adverse moods* 9.) *Loss of relationships*.

What Happens in Our Brains?

Basic neuroscience leads to a simple conclusion; technology is rewiring the brain. The most common concerns are: 1.) *The brain finds high-tech gadgets rewarding* 2.) *The brain hates to be bored* 3.) *High-tech gadgets encourage us to multi-task* 4.) *The light of high-tech devices disrupts our natural sleep cycle*.

Virtual vs. Real Relationships

Face-to-face interactions take time, effort and energy, things that are not part of the relationships in a virtual and high-tech connection. Real world relationship and connection deteriorate through the hazards of high-tech habits. There are 4 risks to real relationships due in part to virtual relationships: 1.) *Connected but isolated*. 2.) *Hiding behind screens*.

3.) *Getting the message but not the meaning*. 4.) *Opening the door to real life temptations*

Managing Our Addictions to Devices

Breaking a habit and addiction, even when it comes to technology, takes a change in perspective and developing healthier habits when it comes to devices: 1.) *Establish boundaries* 2.) *When in public turn it off*. 3.) *Put it away when complete attention is required* 4.) *Get an app to monitor time spent on a device*. 5.) *Practice good manners and common sense* 6.) *Savor the real moments of life, being present using the five natural senses to experience it*.



BOOK LOOK
SNAPSHOTS
GREAT READS
QUICK REVIEWS

Managing Our Video Game Habit

The video game landscape has completely changed since when parents were kids and teens. Video games can now be played on stand-alone consoles, computers, hand-held devices, and smartphones. With the overwhelming amount of ways to play video games comes also an overwhelming trend of addiction. For parents to enjoy the good side of video games and avoid the negative, here are a few helpful tips: 1.) *Establish family rules about them* 2.) *Keep the screens out of the bedroom* 3.) *Stay up to date on the ESRB ratings.* 4.) *Familiarize yourself with the games your kids like to play.*

Managing Facebook Obsessions

Humans are created to be social beings. They are designed to connect with others. Social media allows connection and the ability to share with others near and far. While there are great opportunities in social media, there are also great risks when it comes to teens especially. *Risk #1: Talking to strangers. Risk #2: Sharing to the point of regret. Risk #3: Curating a false self.*

Staying safe in a selfie driven worlds is tricky for parents. Here are a few tips: 1.) *Teach safety.* 2.) *Set boundaries.* 3.) *Check periodically* 4.) *Avoid comparisons with other's online persona* 5.) *Maintain a well-rounded off-line life.*

Managing the Dark Side of the Web

Pornography is on the rise and is more prevalent than ever and that is no secret. Both for children and parents, there is a need to be fully aware and vigilant about setting safeguards. Even the best filters, education, and monitoring still cannot keep children and marriages completely safe. When it comes to children, parents need to raise children that are informed and prepared through: 1.) *Teaching about internet safety.* 2.) *Keep screens public* 3.) *Consider using filter and monitoring software.* 4.) *Talk openly about God's design for love, sex, and purity.* 5.) *Don't panic your child has been exposed to pornography.*

Parents, as well, must be on guard for themselves and their marriages when it comes to the dark side of the web in pornography. There is a spiritual fallout that can occur through adult pornographic addictions of hopelessness, bitterness, broken relationships, and feelings of failure in pleasing God. Marriages will experience relational fallout as partners work to deal with the temptation of pornography, but there is always hope for restoration and recovery through Christ!

Engaging Your Spiritual Life

While there are dangers, concerns, and negative habits that come out of technology, there are positives that can come for parents and families living in a high-tech world. The ability to download sermons, Bible apps, and study resources is continuing to grow. Living in the internet era, it is a time with answers to any question easily at everyone's fingertips, allowing a plethora of opportunities to evangelize locally and globally.

Setting Healthy Boundaries

Living a balanced life in an ever-changing, high-tech world comes from the same place answers have always come from- the Bible. Matthew 22:37-28 shows Jesus' response to the question about the greatest command of life, loving God and loving others. The Biblical focus of parents and families continues to be a relationship with God and how to best live in relationships with the world around us. High-tech gadgets and devices can either contribute to this or create an imbalance. Remember to be wise with time (Psalms 90:12), use our bodies as a temple of the Holy Spirit (I Corinthians 6:19), and make sure whatever we do in word or deed brings honor to God (Colossians 3:17). Whether it is Facebook, Candy Crush or the never ending text messages, parents need to make wise, Godly choices to manage both their own and their children's high-tech habits.

