



## Loving God with All Your Smartphone

*The Pitfalls and Possibilities of Technology*

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# **What Does God Think of the iPhone?**

## **Introduction**

Many people completely alter the course of history and have no idea what they are really doing. Steve Jobs was not one of those people. On January 9, 2018 Steve Jobs stood in his classic dark jeans and black turtleneck proudly declared “Every once in awhile, a revolutionary product comes along that changes everything. . . Today Apple is going to reinvent the phone.” While that might sound like big talk, if anything Steve Jobs undersold the impact his device would have.

The internet is barely 20 years old; Facebook is 14 years old; Twitter is 12 years old; Instagram is 8 years old; and the smart phone as we know it is just 11 years old. How do we use such technology that is so fresh? What kind of long term impact will it have? Is your smart phone your friend or your foe? Does social media help or hurt you? Are we better or worse for the internet? How should we as Christians think about the new technology we see around us? How does God feel about smart phones, Facebook, the printing press, or writing?

## What Is Technology?

- Technology is an extension of humanity – technology is rearranging the raw materials of earth to better, more quickly, or more easily accomplish human goals.
- Technology is a mirror of humanity.
  - Technology enhances what man can do and thereby reflects what man is like.
  - That's good news because man is an image bearer and often uses technology for good.
  - That's bad news because man is fallen and has his mind and heart corrupted.

## Where Did Technology Come From?

- Technology is a natural outflow of two things:
  - Technology is the result of the dominion mandate (Genesis 1:28; 2:15).
    - Subdue (*kabash*) – overcome obstacles presented by nature itself.
    - Work (*'ebed*) – put forth effort and toil to produce a desired result.
    - Keep (*shamar*) – diligently keep a protective watch over.
  - Technology is the result of the image of God in man (Genesis 1:26).
    - Creativity is an attribute of our heavenly Father, and as such when we rearrange the materials of earth into new and better ways, we are acting like him.

## **A Brief Biblical History of Technology**

- Technology is good, though it is not sufficient to stop the evil of man (Genesis 4:21-22).
- Technology can be used by God to accomplish his purposes (Genesis 6:13-14).
- Technology can be used by man to declare his independence (Genesis 11:3-4).

## **Does Scripture Address the Problem of Smartphones?**

- God's Word claims to be the answer to all of life (2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:3). This means that God's Word has all the answers we need to live a godly life.
- Everything should contribute to God's glory (1 Corinthians 10:31)
- If technology is an extension of humanity, it must be surrendered to God (Romans 6:12-14).
- Human nature remains the same, and so does God's answers to human nature.
  - There are no new temptations (1 Corinthians 10:13).
  - What was written earlier was written to help us now (Romans 15:4).
- When we face a specific problem that God's Word doesn't directly address, we should ask three questions:
  - What underlying problems is this an outgrowth of?
  - What Scriptural principles address this problem?
  - What are specific ways these principles can be applied?

## Four Responses to Technology

- Some fear it. “I hate smart phones”
- Some embrace it unquestioningly “I love my smart phone”
- Many use it but feel think it’s a necessary evil “I need my smart phone”
- The best response is to master it “I am thankful for and carefully use my smart phone.”

So what did God think of Steve Jobs announcement of the iPhone? Did he smile or frown? Does God want man to continue pushing the bounds of technology? Or does he disapprove of what we’re doing? God delights when we display his creative character, and he is pleased when diligently work at subduing the world he has placed us in. But too often we replace the Creator with our own little minicreations.

Still, technologies created by broken people (or cultures for that matter) don’t negate the usefulness of those technology. Bricks were first used to rebel against God, but they were later used to build the temple. God was pleased when Apple announced the iPhone. Creative people working together to make something that would powerfully help us is a good thing, but it also created a new opportunity for the darkness of the human heart to be reflected. And so we must be vigilant as Christians scouring God’s Word to find timeless principles that govern the fads of our day, and above all we must see technology as we see everything: a means to glorify God.