**DISTRACTED, HARSH, AND LONELY**

1. **We are addicted to distraction!** We can’t help but be distracted.

Fact: The average person checks their phone every 4.3 minutes of their waking life.

Do you check your phone first thing when you wake up?

Do you sleep with your phone next to you at night?

Studies show that the more addicted you become to your phone, the more prone you are to depression and anxiety, and the less able you are to concentrate at work and sleep at night.

Why do we want to be distracted?

1. Digital distractions keep work away
2. Digital distractions keep people away
   1. God has called us to love our neighbor, and we think we are fulfilling that online, but we’re not! We use distraction to separate us from other people, where God has called us not to think that we’re any better than anyone else.

# **Romans 12:16 New Living Translation (NLT)**

**16**Live in harmony with each other. Don’t be too proud to enjoy the company of ordinary people. And don’t think you know it all!

1. Digital distractions keep deep thoughts away
   1. Thoughts of eternity

Types of distractions

1. Unchecked distractions that blind our souls from God

# **Matthew 13:22 New Living Translation (NLT)**

**22**The seed that fell among the thorns represents those who hear God’s word, but all too quickly the message is crowded out by the worries of this life and the lure of wealth, so no fruit is produced.

1. Unchecked distractions that cut off communication from God

# **Luke 21:34-36 New Living Translation (NLT)**

**34**“Watch out! Don’t let your hearts be dulled by carousing and drunkenness, and by the worries of this life. Don’t let that day catch you unaware, **35**like a trap. For that day will come upon everyone living on the earth. **36**Keep alert at all times. And pray that you might be strong enough to escape these coming horrors and stand before the Son of Man.”

1. Unchecked distractions that mute the urgency of God

*“The more distracted we are digitally, the more displaced we become spiritually.”*

– Tony Reinke

*“when I go into my social media streams, too often I use Facebook to insulate me from the real needs of my friends. Facebook becomes a sanitized room where I can watch the ups and downs of others as an anonymous spectator, with no real compulsive impulse to respond and care in any meaningful way. And as I do, I become more and more blind to the flesh and blood around me.”*

– Tony Reinke

1. **We become harsh to one another!**

“It’s purely contrived images and edited clips ranked against one another. It’s a system based on social approval, likes and dislikes, validation in views, success in followers. ***It’s perfected orchestrated judgment.***”

– Essena O’Neill from her book *Social Media Addiction and Celebrity Culture*

# **Proverbs 10:12 New Living Translation (NLT)**

**12**Hatred stirs up quarrels,  
    but love makes up for all offenses.

# **Proverbs 10:12 New King James Version (NKJV)**

**12**Hatred stirs up strife,  
But love covers all sins.

# **Proverbs 17:9 New Living Translation (NLT)**

**9**Love prospers when a fault is forgiven,  
    but dwelling on it separates close friends.

# **Proverbs 17:9 New King James Version (NKJV)**

**9**He who covers a transgression seeks love,  
But he who repeats a matter separates friends.

*Your phone makes everything impersonal*

* You say things you’d never say in person
* You “pile on” to other comments
* You fire back quickly
* You don’t apologize
* You assume
* You use passive aggressive speech

*Trolling is the new slander*

* Anyone can publish anything about anyone. We post with the intent of provoking hostility without any desire for resolution. What the world calls “trolling” the New Testament calls “slander”

II Corinthians 12:20 New Living Translation (NLT)

**20**For I am afraid that when I come I won’t like what I find, and you won’t like my response. I am afraid that I will find quarreling, jealousy, anger, selfishness, slander, gossip, arrogance, and disorderly behavior.

*Anger is the most viral emotion*

* If we’re honest with ourselves, we have to understand that our smartphones and social media give new life to an age-old problem, anger. Most of us know firsthand what it’s like to participate in slander.

# **I Corinthians 6:1-8 New Living Translation (NLT)**

### **Avoiding Lawsuits with Christians**

**6**When one of you has a dispute with another believer, how dare you file a lawsuit and ask a secular court to decide the matter instead of taking it to other believers[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+cor+6%3A1-8&version=NKJV;NLT#fen-NLT-28429a)]! **2**Don’t you realize that someday we believers will judge the world? And since you are going to judge the world, can’t you decide even these little things among yourselves? **3**Don’t you realize that we will judge angels? So you should surely be able to resolve ordinary disputes in this life. **4**If you have legal disputes about such matters, why go to outside judges who are not respected by the church? **5**I am saying this to shame you. Isn’t there anyone in all the church who is wise enough to decide these issues? **6**But instead, one believer[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+cor+6%3A1-8&version=NKJV;NLT#fen-NLT-28434b)] sues another—right in front of unbelievers!

**7**Even to have such lawsuits with one another is a defeat for you. Why not just accept the injustice and leave it at that? Why not let yourselves be cheated? **8**Instead, you yourselves are the ones who do wrong and cheat even your fellow believers.[[c](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+cor+6%3A1-8&version=NKJV;NLT#fen-NLT-28436c)]

* **In 2020 posting on Facebook is the quickest way to file a lawsuit against someone’s character, allow it to be judged in the court of public opinion, and be sentenced by the power of the written and published word.**

1. **Your Phone makes you lonely**

Smartphones and social media were supposed to cure loneliness! We were promised that we’d all be connected and that we’d always be connected – all the time! But the truth is that we can always be lonely, even in a crowd, and now, even more so, in a digital crowd.

*“Isolation is both the promise and the price of technological advance. The problem is that we invite loneliness, even though it makes us miserable. The history of our use of technology is a history of isolation desired and achieved.”*

* Stephen Marche in “Is Facebook Making us Lonely?”

You don’t spend time in person

* The number of teens who get together with their friends every day has been cut in half in just the past 15 years

# **Proverbs 27:17 New Living Translation (NLT)**

**17**As iron sharpens iron,  
    so a friend sharpens a friend.

Screentime and depression

* We like to argue that we connect with our friends more! I text, snapchat, talk to my friends online whether I’m playing Xbox or PS4, so that should be just as good as hanging out right? If that were the case, then teens who communicate on social media and text should be just as happy, just as likely to dodge loneliness, and just as likely to avoid depression as teens who see their friends in person or engage in other activities that don’t involve screens.
  + Except that’s not the case. Without exception, teens who spend more time on screen activities are more likely to be unhappy, and those who spend more time on non-screen activities are more likely to be happy
    - Study of 8th graders
      * Happiest = sports, exercise, or religious services. Print media, social interaction
      * Most unhappy (worst to least affected) = Internet, social media, texting, computer games, video chat
  + Stats were almost exactly the same for depression

Our smartphones become shields

* Step onto an elevator and take out our phone as a shield to those around us.
* We use them to deter any kind of human connection, the thing we crave the most.

Our phones are frictionless

* We have conversations but can’t see anyone, editing and fixing every word. Emotions are not conveyed through text, but through our eyes, our body language, the cadence of our conversation.
* Example: “shut up” can mean “be quiet” or “no way!” or “I’m so excited” – but over text.. you don’t know

We have to wake up and get saved every morning, devote every day to God, starting with our morning.

# **Psalm 5:3 New Living Translation (NLT)**

**3**Listen to my voice in the morning, Lord.  
    Each morning I bring my requests to you and wait expectantly.

# **Psalm 88:13 New Living Translation (NLT)**

**13**O Lord, I cry out to you.  
    I will keep on pleading day by day.

# **Psalm 90:14 New Living Translation (NLT)**

**14**Satisfy us each morning with your unfailing love,  
    so we may sing for joy to the end of our lives.

**Your phone wants to steal the beginning of the day,**

**because if it can get the beginning of your day, it’s easier to steal the rest.**

Why does our phone steal our solitude? 3 “candy motives” and 3 “avoidance motives”

Candy motives

1. Novelty Candy
2. Ego Candy
3. Entertainment candy

Avoidance motives

1. Boredom avoidance
2. Responsibility avoidance
3. Hardship avoidance

Isolation + feeding on vanity = soul-starving loneliness

Isolation + communion with God = soul-feeding solitude

***Additional Resources***

**In 2007, the iPhone changed the world**

* Social media effects girls differently than boys
  + Social media presents a “curated” version of our lives, and girls may be more adversely affected than boys by the gap between appearance and reality. Studies show that for girls, more than for boys, social life revolves around inclusion and exclusion
  + Girls and boys are aggressive in different ways.
    - Boys are more physically aggressive
    - Girls are more relationally aggressive
* End result? Since 2007, the suicide rate of adolescent girls has **DOUBLED**

In 2018, 1 out of every 7 women at U.S. Universities now thinks of herself as having a psychological disorder, up from just one in eighteen in the 2012