

Struggling with the Influence of Technology*

By Dr. MaryAnn Waldon



An influence that is often viewed as an addiction today is technology. Whether it is a smart phone, computer or tablet, technology absorbs too much time for many of our teens. Do you consider this effect to be detrimental or beneficial? In what way? How does your teen view technology and its influence?

**BALANCE BIBLE STUDY Christ Filled Living with Adolescents, Chapter Three, by Dr. MaryAnn Waldon, #LWML20442
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Opening Prayer: Dear Lord, we ask Your Holy Spirit to be our guide as we deliberate a current issue in our society and its influence on our teens. Help us use wisdom in determining what is detrimental and what is useful in technology. We know that deliberation and insights given through Your Word will provide knowledge that we can use with our teens. We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.

Read **Proverbs 15:21**. What does this passage say that could be applied to technology? _____

What do **Proverbs 15:14** and **Proverbs 23:12** indicate about the use of technology? What do you think is the parent's responsibility? _____

Read **James 1:14-15**. What does this passage indicate might be promoted through various uses of technology? Name some possible consequences. _____

Technology can be a valuable tool in learning, but it can be a detriment also. Parents need to be wise in guiding the use of technology by their teens.

Did you indicate pornography as one of the temptations? Read **Proverbs 16:25**. What is the warning in this passage? _____

Teens might be encouraged to do sexting. What do you know about sexting? To what do you think sexting might lead? _____

Remind your teen how thoughts lead to actions. Read **Philippians 4:8-9**. What kind of actions are we counseled to perform? _____

Another serious danger is the use of technology in the bullying of your teen, or your teen bullying another teen. This is called cyberbullying. On the following page, list steps you might take if you should find this happening.

If your teen is being bullied, how can you support or encourage him or her? _____

Suggest ways a parent might help build a teen's self-concept so that bullying can be resisted and ignored. _____

How could you apply **Proverbs 16:23–24** in helping a teen gain a better self-image? _____

The support and love of a parent give a teen armor against bullying. Together different solutions may be found. According to **Hebrews 13:6**, whose support do we always have? _____

Parenting is never easy, but it can be especially trying for parents of teens. At times our frustration and anxiety levels are very high. What encouragement and hope do **Psalms 31:21–24** and **Romans 15:4–5** provide? _____

Even though you trust your teen, it is wise to use caution and check on behavior that appears questionable. Knowing your teen better than anyone else, you can discern much by paying close attention to subtle clues and observing changes in behavior. Always be aware of what your teen is viewing.

If you find that your teen has succumbed to temptation and has used technology in a detrimental way, reread the words of our Lord in **Matthew 6:14**. What are we to remember when we make mistakes? _____

Read **Galatians 6:1**. Describe your thoughts from this passage as they apply to your teen. How do you interpret the words, "restore him in a spirit of gentleness?" _____

In **John 8:3–11**, what example does Jesus give us? What other instances of His compassion and gentle guidance do you remember from your reading of Scripture? _____

Instruction is given in **Hebrews 12:1** that is excellent advice for a parent. How could you apply this to the example you set and to your teen's life and activity? _____

Always turn to the Lord in prayer. He is your constant strength and will provide wisdom as you assist your teen. Draw strength from His church, His Sacraments, and His Holy Word.

Proverbs 19:18a is very direct about a parent's responsibility. How do you understand these words? _____

Another passage also provides a caution. Read **Proverbs 11:14**. If we interpret discipline as guidance, then we must consider how important the role of the parent is in shepherding the use of technology.

If supervision is not given, the use of technology and social media can lead to regrettable circumstances with consequences which affect both family and friends. What encouragement does **Proverbs 16:20–21** reiterate for a parent? _____

Careful attention to the use of technology and monitoring access to social media in a teen's life will allow technology to be a beneficial resource for learning and communication rather than a detriment to self-esteem. However, parents must be able to discern how the teen is using technology. Parental guidance makes the difference.

Closing Prayer: Dear all-knowing Lord, difficult days may come into our lives when constant new discoveries occur in technology. Sometimes technology appears and changes so fast that we are not even aware of it before our teens are using it in their lives. Give us the wisdom to determine what is beneficial and what is detrimental. Help us to guide our teens in the wise use of technology. Strengthen us to offer protection, through discipline, should it become detrimental in their lives. We trust Your loving guidance and rely on our Savior, Christ Jesus. Amen.

Closing Hymn: Sing or say together "Oh, That the Lord Would Guide My Ways" (LSB #707; LW #392; TLH #416).