

WORSHIP

SUGGESTED WORSHIP SONGS:

Turn Our Eyes Upon Jesus, Your Love Awakens Me, Because He lives, Beautiful Savior

WELCOME

Digital Addiction Test. Share to the group how much time you usually spend using digital devices on entertainment, games, social media and others.

WORD

1 CORINTHIANS 6:12 (CSB)

¹²*“Everything is permissible for me,” but not everything is beneficial. “Everything is permissible for me,” but I will not be mastered by anything.*

In the context of technology, everything is permissible, but we should not allow ourselves to be addicted or be mastered by it.

When we look into digital technology, many of us may be guilty of symptoms of addiction that we see in our children. The good news is God is on a digital rescue mission and everything is reversible by His grace.

SYMPTOMS OF ADDICTION

Addiction essentially takes place in the pleasure center of the brain called *nucleus accumbens*. The reason we get addicted is because we enjoy things too much, to which the brain reacts. The chemicals we get from smoking, alcohol, or prohibited drugs get transported to the brain which then responds and generates a neurotransmitter called ‘dopamine’ – the pleasurable sensation.

In the case of digital addiction, the “drug” is delivered to the eyes and ears, and the brain gets directly stimulated and responds with dopamine. When the brain gets too much dopamine from over-stimulation, the brain gets used to taking the same amount of stimulants over time. So, if you desire to get the same level of high like the first time, you would gradually have to consume more and more to satisfy your desire. The wall of resistance in the brain is also growing and is pushing out the extra dopamine. As resistance builds up in the body, addiction grows. The top apparent symptoms of addiction are **anger, depression and anxiety, and emotional numbness or anhedonia.**

There are parents who use digital gadgets as a baby sitter because it is cheap and convenient. When it is given to a young child, it does have a calming effect.

But the problem comes in when it is time to take it away, because the child can become very, very **angry**. And because the world has gone completely digital, there are also parents who think that if they do not give digital gadgets to their children at the youngest stage possible, and if they do not teach them how to use them to multi-task, their children will not become successful.

But in reality, digital multi-tasking causes **anxiety**. If we get used to getting a lot of dopamine, we easily get bored. As an example, we often come to church with a dopaminergic wall. As the level of dopamine decreases, we get anxiety. To fix it, we feel the need to check something on our digital device. Once the dopamine’s level is up again, we put it down and resume listening to the preacher. If we approach God this way, we will miss out on what He has to say.

Nobody can multi-task. The truth is we can only pay attention to one thing at a time. When you try to multi-task, the brain gets overloaded with dopamine, which makes cognitive abilities deteriorate. The human brain is a sequential uni-tasking processor that can only do one thing at a time. We only switch between things so rapidly that we think we are multi-tasking and being productive but when we measure our productivity it actually decreases dramatically.

STOP AND TAKE A U-TURN

Truth matters, and it can set us free (**John 8:32**). The truth is today our children are not being disciplined by us, but by the culture around us through their devices. In fact, studies show that young people have been exposed to pornography. The scary part of it is that online pornography is fast becoming a norm among young people even to those who go to church. Among adults, there are statistics showing that there

WORD (cont'd)

is direct correlation between video gaming and pornography. This changes and ruins marriage.

Facts and figures based on science about digital addiction should not scare or condemn us. But we need a paradigm shift from the culture that draws us away from the truth, back to the Word of God. God wants the color in our brain to come back and the dopaminergic wall to come down. **Take a full stop** now from your digital addiction. But note that only when you immerse yourself in other activities will you be able to effectively limit your digital engagements to what is only necessary.

Here are some practical ways that may help you make a U-turn: Remove all technology from the bedroom; use traditional alarm clock; turn-off all push notifications; replace smart phones with flip phones; replace video games with board and card games;

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

(Leaders: Please choose questions that are appropriate to the level of spiritual maturity of your members)

1. **Permissible.** What is permissible to Paul according to our main verse? What are the terms that come with it?
2. **Diagnose.** Have you been experiencing symptoms of digital addiction? What symptoms are you experiencing?
3. **Reset.** Admit and confess your digital addiction. What specific changes will you apply in your life in order to be totally freed from your addiction to it?

WORKS

PRAY CARE SHARE IN ACTION

List down the ways you plan to be detoxed from your digital addiction. Use the outcome as part of your Pray-Care-Share in action after 3 weeks.

WEEKLY PRAYER POINTS

I. Thanksgiving

- Worship God for who He is, what He has done, and what He will do in our lives

II. Country and the World

- Upright and moral governance of Public Servants and a God-centered Philippines
- Repentance and Salvation

III. Church

- That CCF Members would honor and love God and make disciples
- Elders, Pastors, Leaders, and Families
- Ministries and Churches worldwide

IV. CCF Facilities

- Worship and Training Center
- Prayer Mountain

V. Personal Concerns

- Deeper intimate relationship with God
- Righteous living
- Salvation of family and friends

replace all electronic babysitters with humans; no music when studying and sleeping. But do not sell your video games, otherwise you will be a digital “drug” pusher.

But most important of all, **take a U-turn back to God** for confession, forgiveness, and healing. These all begin with the fear of the Lord. Ask forgiveness and washing with His precious blood and to confess to God and to other people (**1 John 1:9**). Get yourself in a small group for accountability (**James 5:16**). Swallow your pride, make it right with others (**Proverbs 16:18**), let God put you into a path of moving forward and turning this world upside down for His glory.

Return to Jesus, He is waiting for your intimacy with Him as you used to enjoy with your digital gadgets.