

Intro:

1. **LOUIS CK Video – Everything is amazing and no one is happy**
2. That was more than a decade ago... 2008
3. It's funny. And rings true.
  - a. Have are we relating to technology in the last decade? Have we gotten any better? What would that even look like?
  
4. **Quick recap: relating series**
  - a. **Today= Relating to Technology**
  - b. Technology=
    - i. **Anything we create that extends or amplifies our abilities in some way**
    - ii. Enabling us to do and accomplish more than we could have otherwise
  - c. Tech's value-NEUTRAL!
    - i. Tool
    - ii. **Like this hammer**
      1. A basic piece of Tech
    - iii. Can be used for great good
      1. But can also be misused
      2. Doesn't work to well w screws
    - iv. Or this saw
      1. Great power for good
      2. But great potential for destruction if used wrongly
    - v. That's true with all tech!
  - d. So the question isn't essentially Is tech good or bad
    - i. What matters is what we DO with it. What we use it For!
  - e. Today 1<sup>st</sup> topic about Relating to a non-person
    - i. WHY talking about relating to a non-relational entity?
  - f. Take again this hammer
    - i. **Does this hammer speak to you?**
    - ii. Does it have an agenda?
    - iii. Have you heard any sermons about the importance of relating to our hammers?
      1. Or saws.
      2. For good reason.
    - iv. **But increasingly our sophisticated tech IS speaking to us**
      1. Often in a female voice, working for us in a thousand ways
      2. And dinging DESPERATELY for our attention
    - v. **Perhaps the most novel and influential tech in our lives today is our smartphone**
      1. Never before has one piece of tech been the central answer to so many of our needs and wants
      2. Fundamentally changing the way we live and work and relate.
    3. **And most people have one in their pocket or purse – NEVER TOO FAR AWAY!**
      - a. PEW Research shows: 81% of Americans now own smartphone as of Feb this yr (up from just 35% only 8 yrs ago)

b. 96% of ppl ages 18-29 own smartphone

vi. **So tonight we're going to look specifically at how SHOULD you be relating to your SMARTPHONES**

1. So for THAT kind of important Q, we must turn to the Bible
2. **PRAY**
3. **We need some sort of objective standard by which to evaluate our tech**, our phones.
  - a. More than just IS IT POSSIBLE
4. **Tech is advancing so quickly.** At an unprecedented pace. In my lifetime alone, the computer, internet, mobile tech, and the hyper-connected INTERNET OF THINGS has changed our lives dramatically. SO MUCH IS POSSIBLE through modern tech! And so now through our smartphones!
  - a. **SO MUCH IS POSSIBLE!!!!**
  - b. But as Paul reminds the church in Corinth multiple times in 1 Cor 6:12 and 10:23 that even though something's possible DOESN'T MEAN it's beneficial. And even though something's permissible doesn't mean it won't enslave and master us.
5. **The Bible is our foundation for answering fundamental questions** about What is Good and Bad. What's the purpose of life. How SHOULD we relate to people and things.
  - a. Tonight we'll focus in on something Jesus said that will help us as we investigate how we SHOULD use and relate to our phones:
6. **John 15:5 -- speaking to his Disciples** about life and what really matters, JC says
  - a. <sup>5</sup>I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing. (ESV)
  - b. Does this passage teach us anything about how we should think about and use tech?
    - i. Yes it does!
  - c. **Jesus here is saying what the essence of the whole of scripture is teaching us about our lives and what matters:**
    - i. **Jesus Himself is the source** of life and meaning (not us, not our phones)
    - ii. Life is about LIVING and resting in HIM, and then bearing the fruit of that in and out from our lives.
    - iii. Apart from Jesus, we can do nothing lasting value
    - iv. That means the purpose of our WHOLE EXISTENCE – INCLUDING THE PURPOSE OF THE TECH WE CREATE SHOULD BE TO live increasingly connected INTIMATELY with God through Jesus...
    - v. And all for the production of FRUIT!
    - vi. **I'll say it again, Jesus teaches our PHONES should lead us to connect more deeply with Him and to do good works to bless others.**
      1. WHAT is good fruit – GOOD WORKS for others that should come through our lives?
      2. For more on that we turn to Galatians 5, Paul writing to a church similarly about the kind of life we should live as Followers of Jesus:
7. Gal 5:22
  - a. **22-23 the fruit of the Spirit [of God] is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,<sup>23</sup> gentleness, self-control**
    - i. As followers of Jesus, THIS IS WHAT WE WANT OUR LIVES TO PRODUCE!
    - ii. THIS IS what we want our tech to amplify, enhance
    - iii. So as we evaluate WHAT SHOULD WE USE OUR TECH FOR, here's our master list!

## 8. Gal 5:19-21

- a. To drive home the point, Paul says the fruit of the “sinful” flesh are quite the opposite:
- b. <sup>19</sup> **Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality,** <sup>20</sup> **idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions,** <sup>21</sup> **envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these.**
- c. This is what our lives are NOT SUPPOSED TO produce: the fruit of the flesh
  - i. It’s the fruit of our sinful hearts
- d. This is what our tech should NOT produce, amplify, enable, enhance.
- e. BUT since this is what’s in us, our sinful natures, this is what our tech will also produce BY DEFAULT
  - i. **It’s a tool that amplifies and enables WHAT’S IN US**
  - ii. So we must consider CAREFULLY how we use our tools. Our Phones.
  - iii. Because they have great power and potential for GOOD and for Evil!
  - iv. So we MUST consider carefully
    - v. Does my use of my smartphone increase my FREEDOM to love and abide in Christ, to engage in GOOD WORKS?
    - vi. Or does it lead me to enslavement and enable greater works of evil?

## 9. We’ll use the analogy of the vine and the fruit to help us consider the effect of our smartphones [SLIDE]

- a. We can stack them up in a list to see how they relate and oppose each other.
- b. We won’t necessarily hit each one, but hit some of them to help us evaluate the effects our smartphones are having on us and the fruit of our lives:

### 1. Self control vs drunkenness

- a. Drunkenness, being under the influence, unable to control yourself
  - i. Drunkenness over time leads to ADDICTION
- b. We see this effect from our phones, to be sure!
- c. **ADDICTION to smartphones** and SocMed
  - i. At a basic level, we’re increasingly addicted to distraction
  - ii. **Zombification**
    - 1. Pics!!!!
    - 2. They’re starting to put up signs!
    - 3. Nobody looks up anymore
    - 4. At lunches together
    - 5. Family meals (2)
    - 6. Mommy Daughter time
    - 7. Daddy son time
    - 8. Family time
  - iii. Amusement
    - 1. Netflix
    - 2. A-muse = without thought = zombies
    - 3. Addiction to amusement
    - 4. Loss of value of contemplation and rest
      - a. Strategic Boredom
  - iv. Addicted to Notifications
    - 1. Like button
  - v. Addiction to affirmation on SocMed
  - vi. FOMO
    - 1. Leads us to decreasingly live in our real world limited by time and space

2. So that we end up MISSING OUT on what's really happening around us
- vii. Don't think you're addicted?**
  - 1. CELL PHONE ACTIVITY – PASS PHONE TO LEFT!**
- viii. Paul's words from 1 Cor ring again:
  1. I WILL NOT BE MASTERED BY ANYTHING
- ix. Are we in control? Or are we being mastered by our smartphones?**
- d. Our phones are literally programmed to get us addicted to them.
  - i. An ominous note here: we're reminded another way our smartphones are quite different from other human tech before them:
    1. Though the device itself is technically value-neutral and disinterested,
    2. They are being used BY corporations with a clear and powerful agenda.
    3. The manipulation AND MONETIZATION of your attention and desires
    4. For the first time in human history, our hammer is actively TRYING TO USE US
- e. **OK pass phones back!**
  - i. What was that like for you?
  - ii. Anyone experience some anxiety, irritation, even from just a few seconds of separation from our phones???

## 2. Patience and kindness vs Jealousy and Envy and rivalry

- a. How do our phones push us toward these?
- b. Well we know Comparison is a big deal specifically w/ our SocMed engagement
- c. The whole this is built on the ability and DESIRE to compare ourselves with others**
  - i. I want to put out MY BEST Instagram face
    1. My best moment of my week
    2. My best and brightest and envy-producing scenes
  - ii. Because we're all so Desperately seeking approval and status**
    1. And trying to get it in comparison to others
  - iii. There's a problem with this, though
    1. It's not ever going to work.
    2. Everyone is taking
    3. But no one is giving it
    4. 2 ticks and no dog
  - iv. Compare and despair**
    1. So in the end we despair because we compare the BEST part of others lives to the most MUNDANE parts of our own
    2. And we realize deep in our hearts that we aren't having near as much fun as our FB friends. Don't make near as much money.
      - a. Not as good looking
      - b. Not as successful
      - c. Kids not near as good or successful
    3. So we get the double whammy of not getting the approval we crave from others AND feeling bad about ourselves!
- d. Can you relate to that?**
  - i. Does your use of your phone and socmed give GREATER expression to your heart tendencies toward jealousy and envy?
  - ii. Do you live in subtle SocialMedia rivalry with your supposed Friends?
  - iii. Do you compare and despair?
    1. Or, perhaps worse, compare and think yourself actually better than others?

- e. Yah, our smartphones influence us heavily in this area
- f. We far less prone to be kind and patient with others messy lives.
  - i. Their failings
  - ii. Our OWN failings.
- g. Our father is patient, scripture tells us. So patient with us.**
- h. He's also infinitely and deeply kind.** So willing to give of HIMSELF for our good (the heart of the Gospel of Jesus)
  - i. Yet so many of us are bitterly unkind to others online, and perhaps most TO OURSELVES
    - 1. Remember song: BE KIND TO YOURSELF
- i. Are our phones helping us abide more deeply in that Vine? The source of kindness and patience?
  - i. Or something else?

### 3. How about Peace vs Strife?

- a. Strife means a grating of one thing against another**
  - i. Could be between different people
  - ii. Could be internal w/in yourself
- b. Do our phones lead us to peace, or to strife?
  - i. As we've already seen, our socMed use tends to make us view others as opponents and enemies
  - ii. And leads us to try to satisfy the itch for significance and affirmation in our souls from others.
- c. Instead, the Bible teaches us that our souls long for GOD alone. And he is the only true source of Peace and Rest for our souls.
  - i. How do our phones effect us here?
- d. Well the research is pretty clear actually:
  - i. Studies tell us plainly that "the more addicted you are to your phone, the more prone you are to anxiety and depression and the less able you are to focus at work and sleep at night" – 12 Ways
- e. Anxiety and Depression**
  - i. Not really even disputed.
  - ii. Clearly documented in study after study
  - iii. Use of smartphones, especially as linked to our socmed, leads us to anxiety and depression
  - iv. That's the opposite of peace.
  - v. That's strife – an inability to rest within yourself
- f. There's more:
  - i. Most check their smartphones within minutes of waking.**
  - ii. 73% admit to prioritizing checking their phone in the morning OVER connecting with God through his Word and Prayer
    - 1. The primary means God has provided for our peace
    - 2. And to abide in the Vine
- g. To be sure, you can read your Bible on your phone.**
  - i. We have access in a historically unprecedented way, to dozens of free translations of the Bible. WITH STUDY NOTES!
  - ii. But do you?
  - iii. Do you use that access? That incredible power?
- h. Or, like most of us, INCLUDING MYSELF, do you wake up and reach for another mobile HIT before you've even rubbed the sleep out of your eyes**

### 4. How about the fruit of Faithfulness vs the Sinful fruit of Idolatry and Divisions

- a. Faithfulness refers primarily to our commitment to others, to relationships, for their good.
  - i. A Faithful friend.**

- b. Certainly our phones have the power to help us do this!
  - i. We can keep in touch with friends even when they're half a world away
    - 1. **Recently able to keep up with 2 of my friends via iMessage even though they were deployed across the globe.**
      - a. Even in the midst of warzone
    - 2. I could instantly send them encouraging words, pictures, videos, Scriptures.
      - a. Let them know someone still cared. Ask them about their lives and heart
    - 3. This is a utter miracle
    - 4. Our phones do have the potential for great faithfulness and relational fruit
- c. But it also has the potential → and perhaps preference! → to hinder deep relating
- d. **HINDERED Relationship – division**
  - i. Decreased ability to relate intimately to others IN PERSON
  - ii. **Confusion of number of “connections” with true intimacy and friendship**
    - 1. That's why so many have hundreds of FB friends, but are still so lonely.
  - iii. **Smartphone and SocMed are eroding our basic social skills**
    - 1. We're decreasingly able to carry on a conversation in real life in real time
    - 2. How to communicate respect and interest
    - 3. How to navigate difficult issues w/in relationships
    - 4. How to think and work deeply toward common good and compromise
  - iv. **Loss of social DESIRE**
    - 1. Aversion to relating in real time in person
    - 2. Avoid phone calls, FT, in favor of a brief text or SocMed message
- e. Increased Selfishness/ Self – Focus
  - i. SocMed is Essentially individualistic and self-focused
    - 1. Fueled and empowered by the smartphone
    - 2. The root of idolatry

## 5. Lets end by looking at tech's potential to amplify LOVE vs Sexual Immorality

- a. In greek, that word is PORNEA
- b. Porno
  - i. **We're going to talk more about our sexuality in a few weeks, so this won't be exhaustive, but we HAVE to touch on it some here.**
  - ii. Sexual immorality and pornography is nothing new.
    - 1. You can find ancient explicit paintings on pottery and walls
    - 2. Records of rampant use of ritual prostitution
  - iii. **But Never before in all of history** has raw sexually immoral experiences been so readily available for immediate and seeming private consumption → through our mobile devices – the vast majority of porno content is now viewed online via mobile devices!
  - iv. **Indeed it's pumped free into our homes, bathrooms**
    - 1. Our KIDS ROOMS
    - 2. 11 is the average age that a child is first exposed to porn, and 94% of children will see porn by the age of 14.
    - 3. Nearly half of young adults say they come across porn at least once a week—even when they aren't seeking it out.
    - 4. Most teens are “sexting”—either on the receiving or sending end of sexually explicit images.
      - a. *62% of teens and young adults have received a sexually explicit image and 41% have sent one (usually from/to their boy/girlfriend or friend).*
    - 5. Teens & young adults view “not recycling” as more immoral than viewing porn.

- a. 32% say viewing porn is “usually or always wrong” compared to 56% who say not recycling is “usually or always wrong.”

**v. And it’s decimating us!**

1. of 18-30 year old men, 79% view porno at at least monthly!
  - a. 67% of 31-49 year olds; 49% of 50-68 year olds.
2. Increasingly women
  - a. 76% of 18-30 year old women view porn at least monthly
3. 55% of married men and 25% of married women say they watch porn at least once a month.
4. Study after study shows how consumption of pornographic material unilaterally and significantly decreases our ability to have enjoy fulfilling sexual relations with their real spouse.
5. 56% of American divorces involve one party having an “obsessive interest” in pornographic websites.
6. PORN IS KILLING LOVE and killing our families
  - a. And it’s coming almost exclusively now through our mobile devices.

**vi. Yes, even here in the church**

1. Our stats aren’t much different than those OUTSIDE the church!
2. Of young Christian adults 18-24 years olds, 76% actively search for porn.
3. 68% of church-going men are viewing porn regularly
4. and over 50% of pastors view porn on a regular basis!
5. The vast majority of faith leaders who struggle with porn say this has significantly affected their ministry in a negative manner.
6. Porn is killing love AND Ministry
  - a. Perhaps one of the most alarming and descimating comment possible to a Christian
  - b. Rather than abiding in, finding our deep satisfaction and life in JESUS, we’re eating the rotten fruit of independence, inhumanity, and death we first tasted in the Garden
  - c. Made INCREASINGLY possible by our smartphones

**vii. It’s BIG BUSINESS**

1. The porn industry’s annual revenue is more than the NFL, NBA, and MLB combined.
2. Porn Industry Is specifically TARGETING YOU, YOUR SPOUSE, YOUR KIDS
  - a. And succeeding, largely through our smartphones

**viii. In studies by the Barna Group and Covenant Eyes:**

1. <https://conquerseries.com/15-mind-blowing-statistics-about-pornography-and-the-church/>
2. *CovenantEyes-PornStats pdf*
3. <https://www.barna.com/the-porn-phenomenon/>

**c. We must weep over what is happening.**

- i. I tell you, where human beings are being reduced to bodies and products to be consumed, you can be assured, behind it all, are spiritual forces of evil executing a CLEAR plan, bent on your destruction

**6. So what do we DO about it?**

- a. Are we supposed to just throw out all our smartphones and live off the grid?
  - i. Quick response is no – I still have mine!
- b. The answer to that is complicated**
  - i. And it will almost certainly be different from person to person
  - ii. So let’s avoid overly simplistic and dogmatically narrow answers here
- c. We must START by honestly and bravely asking ourselves hard questions.

- i. The kind of questions that prove we're ultimately the masters of our tech, and not being mastered by it
- ii. The critical evaluation we'd give any tool:

**1. Recognize and ADMIT first of all that you're not exempt from the negative effects of your phone**

- a. How often DO you check your phone?
- b. What do you do in moments of space / boredom?

**2. Honestly assess and consider how your use of your phone and socMed effects your ability to abide in the Vine and bear the good fruit of Good Works.**

- a. Do you turn to your mobile device as the answer to your boredom, loneliness, insignificance?
- b. Does your use of SocMed expose and amplify your jealousy and envy?
  - i. Your tendency to see value through comparison
  - ii. Your tendency toward harshness and anger rather than kindness and patience?
- c. Does your use of your phone actually give you the rest you're looking for?
  - i. Does your amusement time on Netflix, pintrest, FB, espn, etc.... does it actually help you REST? Do you feel truly restored and rejuvenated after to engage deeper w God and others?
  - ii. Does your use of SocMed actually satisfy your deep longings for friendships and intimacy?
    - 1. Or are you left feeling MORE isolated, depressed, anxious, discontent
- d. How is your phone impacting your relationships with your spouse, kids

**3. Remember the Gospel .**

- a. We all desperately need God
- b. And all us run from him by default and try to make life work on our own
- c. All of us are mortally sick with sin
- d. And that's why Jesus came for you. Died for your sins.
- e. So the Father could run to you, embrace you, forgive you, and lead you to full and everlasting life.
- f. (Re)Connect with the VINE
  - i. And produce good fruit, for the healing and blessing of others
- g. God wants to help you in this. You're not alone. And the only way out of this hole is in Him. His power. Not merely your own resolve to change.
- h. Only in placing yourself firmly in the GRACE of God can you then begin to take real concrete steps of freedom with our phones.

**4. Set some boundaries on your phone use.**

- a. Different steps AND resolutions for different people
  - i. Some will be able to easily set boundaries on their phones
    - 1. And use them as tools, maximizing good and minimizing bad
  - ii. Others will need to take more drastic steps in view of our calling to abide in the Vine and produce good fruit.
- b. **Suggestions:**
  - i. These are just suggestions.
  - ii. THAT I'VE PERSONALLY FOUND HELPFUL
  - iii. Get the ball rolling as you consider personally with God and with your spouse
  - iv. (ONLY BRIEFLY MENTION)
- c. **Consider a detox** period from your phone and/or SocMed → addiction



- i. Severely restrict your smartphone/SocMed use (or switch back to an old dumb phone you still have in a drawer)
    - 1. Go off SocMed for at For 21 days = general benchmark to break habits and addictions
  - ii. Then reevaluate.
    - 1. Some may reintegrate Phone and/or SocMed after detox
    - 2. Others may decide to ditch phone or SocMed indefinitely.
      - a. **I did, w/ my SocMed nearly.**
        - i. Basically nonexistent on FB or IG except for Tallgrass engagements
      - b. Settled decision to avoid many of these neg effects for me and cultivate a life more available to people in person.
        - i. I've given up some things for sure
        - ii. But for now, feel I've gained more.
      - c. Others, like Deaver, have chosen to use SocMed strategically to engage with the lost
      - d. A reminder that one size wont fit all here, and that's ok!
- d. **Minimize your notifications**
  - i. Turn off all non-essential notifications
- e. **Put phone on DO NOT DISTURB** mode when you get home from work – AND DON'T CHECK IT until bedtime, or some other predetermined time.
- f. **DELAY CHECKING NOTIFICATIONS**
  - i. Train yourself NOT to check notifications, missed calls, texts while you're with other people
- g. **Set up agreed upon No-Phone Zones** → Especially helpful for me
  - i. NO PHONES in the bathroom
    - 1. Time waster, porno inviter
  - ii. **NO PHONES in the bedroom → ME!**
    - 1. Intimacy killer
    - 2. If use for alarm, consider getting \$7 old school alarm clock from Walmart
    - 3. Or plug in phone on your dresser, away from bed
      - a. Books, Kindles, FINE, but no phones!
    - 4. A little bit of boredom in the bedroom might not be that bad of a thing
- h. **Get accountability to protect you and your kids from porn**
  - i. If you're using your mobile device to consume pornography, something needs to change NOW
    - 1. **Jesus -- IF YOUR RIGHT EYE CAUSES YOU TO SIN, PLUCK IT OUT! (mat 5:29)**
    - 2. For many now, it's a similar sentiment!
    - 3. Way better to have a "dumb" phone and not stumble in this
  - ii. **Seriously consider getting rid of (or stopping use of) your smartphone** – whether for a limited time or indefinitely to get some victory here
    - 1. Your very soul is at stake
    - 2. And your family and church ARE being affected – no matter how you can tell
  - iii. If you decide to keep your smartphone, take clear steps to institute accountability
  - iv. **Accountability needs to come in tech and human forms**
  - v. Some great software to help block explicit content and provide accountability to selected peers
    - 1. **EXAMPLE: Covenant Eyes**
  - vi. Have a few friends of the same sex that help you w accountability

1. Folks who won't dismiss offenses – BECAUSE WE ALL DO IT nor folks who will blast you with law and condemnation
  - a. Folks who will take sin seriously and help you walk in Grace, Repentance, and Freedom
- vii. Lean desperately into the Gospel for you in this
  1. The Good News if Jesus is that forgiveness, change, and healing IS POSSIBLE.
  2. And our shame can be taken away forever. Perhaps the best news we could hear!
  3. **We want to be a church that loves well those who are healing from sexual sin.**

## 5. Consider how to use your phone for GOOD

- a. Evernote for prayer cards
- b. Reminders for prayer requests and encouraging texts, emails
- c. Bible reading plans
  - i. Studies show folks who use bible reading plans on mobile are MORE likely to be consistent than those reading physical bible
  - ii. BUT retain less!
- d. Use Soc Med to encourage and enhance F2F relating!
  - i. GroupMes and FB groups to help groups meet together IN PERSON
- e. Use SocMed To encourage real equipping
  - i. Discipleship
  - ii. Community
  - iii. Love and peace
  - iv. Eye for neighbor
  - v. Point people to Scripture, truth, good works, God – THE KOG
- f. LOTS MORE potential here  
Remember that Tech isn't essentially evil—it's part of our essential human creativity, God Given!
  - i. It extends and amplifies our abilities and desires
- g. **No indication that the New Earth will be tech-less.**
- h. Consider that if humanity has accomplished SO MUCH with tech, even with our fallen sinful natures, CAN YOU IMAGINE what we will do with resurrected bodies and minds FREED FROM SIN?
  - i. Creativity leading to tech of incredible power and utility for good – for God's GLORY!
- i. Lets together get practice NOW for what's to come.
  - i. Who knows what God might do as we learn to use our tech for good!

## 6. RESOURCES

- a. Helpful book 12 Ways your Cell Phone is Changing You
  - i. Free pdf?
- b. Covenant Eyes
  - i. Software
  - ii. Stats, articles

## 7. Q&A

- a. Qs: How have you found tech/phone/SocMed to be a hindrance to abiding in Jesus and bearing fruit?
- b. What boundaries, guidelines have you put in place?
- c. How have you found tech HELPFUL?

## 8. PRAY