

Christian Ethics

The Ethics of Media/Technology

In the widest possible use of the word, “culture” refers to the way we use God’s creation

- God created a world filled with natural resources
- It is part of man’s responsibility to mine them, harvest them, and use them in a way that glorifies God.
- Rom 1:25 Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen.

- In order to access and use God's resources, we invented tools
- And God Himself gave us the means to communicate information to each other: language
- And this information is communicated through some form of medium
- "Medium" is from the Latin for middle, and came to mean "The intervening substance."
- Things like print: which gave us books, Bibles, and hymnals.

- Things like radio, which gave us programming and telephones
- Things like television
- Things like the internet, which gives us smart phones

We are always up against the same challenge

- One component of every sin is violation of purpose.
- We use or value things contrary to God's purpose

I Corinthians 7.29-33

- In the course of discussing marriage, Paul points out the necessity of properly valuing things in this life
- Human relationships and possessions are fleeting, and should be valued as such
- So they may be “used,” but not abused. I Cor. 7.31
- Because the “scheme” of this world is going

I Timothy 4.1-6

- Once again, God's concern is that we properly understand purpose
- Something false teachers get wrong

2 Practical considerations

- First, we want to make sure we make the distinction between the media/technology itself, and its impact on our sin nature. Our sin nature is the problem.
- Second, we don't want to pretend that the tool (media/technology) is without impact
- It's pretty hard to argue that what is seen on television doesn't affect us, when advertisers spend billions of dollars in ads (70.6 billion, 2016)

In the book “12 Ways Your Phone Is Changing You,” the author (Tony Reinke) argues

- They amplify our addiction to distractions and so splinter our perception of our place in time
- They push us to evade the limits of embodiment, and thereby cause us to treat one another harshly
- They feed our craving for immediate approval and promise to hedge our fear of missing out

- They undermine our literary skills...and make it increasingly difficult for us to identify ultimate meaning
- They offer us a buffet of produced media and tempt us to indulge in visual vices (how many of you know who Logan Paul is?)
- They overtake and distort our identity and tempt us toward unhealthy isolation and loneliness