

CULTIVATING REST IN A DIGITAL AGE

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I grew up on the very cusp of the cell phone revolution. I got my first phone at 15, a basic black rectangle with capabilities to call and text (but of course, texting was expensive back then!). My phone was only for emergencies, especially as I learned to drive. I remember leaving it in my car all day while in school and regularly forgetting to check it and charge it. How different from my current relationship with my iPhone, which is almost glued to my hand and provides endless opportunities to stave away boredom and connect with others!



While living in a world where we're connected 24/7 to news, social media, and ways of talking may seem like an exceptional technological advance, we also know that it isn't good for us or our children. The current generation has more access to technology than any previous generation. Last week's parent blog discussed the pros and cons of using technology to stay connected (and safe) online. While there are benefits, easy access to digital communication tools can keep our kids from turning their brains off and taking time for much-needed rest and personal connections. So, how can we help our children balance technology use with rest?

1. **Watch for burnout:** "Burnout" is a term typically used to describe adults, especially in the context of work. But burnout can affect people of any age. Burnout happens when you feel overwhelmed; technology can contribute to that. Being constantly available online or comparing ourselves to others on social media can lead to frustration and exhaustion. Watch for signs of burnout in your kids, and ensure they know you are a safe space to share their big feelings.
2. **Establish "no tech" times:** Set aside specific times when your family will engage in intentional, face-to-face conversation and interaction without phones, tablets, or computers. Perhaps this means establishing a "no phone at the dinner table" rule or having everyone silence their devices while you go for a weekend walk.
3. **Create a schedule for screen time:** Along with creating the "no tech" times, schedule specific times to video call family from out of town or allow your child to be online with their friends during particular hours on the weekend. Talk together about quality screen time and think more about what happens online during screen time and less about how much time.
4. **Encourage quiet time:** Even God had to rest after creating our world! Encourage your child to have quiet alone time. Help them establish a routine for this time—maybe it's doing personal devotions or spending time in prayer with God. Lead by example and take your own quiet time with God.

Helping our children realize that, despite having access to technology, they don't *have* to be connected 24/7 will encourage them to rest and find respite in God. Help them remember that Jesus fostered intentional relationships without technology and that they can do the same.

Want to do a deep dive? Check out Family Fire's article [Cultivating Rest as a Family](#).

