

No App For That

Life Group Lesson - Week of March 5

Are you a member of the Next-Best-Thing Club? Often we get so caught up in the culture around us, we think we are not cool if we don't have the latest phone or tech gadget. And once we have the latest device, suddenly we feel like we are a part of the club, at least until the next new thing comes out. Many aspects of technology are helpful. But if we're not careful, our quest for (and time invested in) the latest, greatest gadget vies for our time over the most important things in life, i.e. people.

In the Old Testament, the book of Numbers tells the story of Israel in the wilderness. Upon their freedom from Egyptian slavery, the LORD immediately began preparing them to become a nation set apart for God's purpose in the world. Because the Lord struck down the firstborn son of every home in Egypt, the LORD told Moses that every firstborn son of the Hebrews was now to be redeemed (see Exodus 13:14-15, Numbers 3:11-13). Though God is just, and all sin deserves punishment, God also has a plan for redemption. It is Moses' job to mediate God's way to God's people.

Read Numbers 3:40-51

The Levites, the tribe specifically assigned to assist the priests, were instructed to be "substitutes for the firstborn sons of Israel" (v41). God's provision for a substitute points to Christ as our ultimate substitute through His death on the cross. When Christ died on the cross His perfect sacrifice redeemed all of humanity for all time.

1. **Read Colossians 1:15-22.** According to v20, how has God made peace with everything in heaven and earth?

According to v22, how has God reconciled you to Himself?

In ten words or less, describe your response to the Lord (to date)?

Technology can be helpful but if we could see what we are missing by not spending time with God, we may be more apt to rethink our use of time. Up to this point in your life, you may have not given much thought to God and His Word (the Bible). Perhaps your response to faith has been indifferent. Maybe you have a hard time believing that God could love you. Or perhaps, it may be that you genuinely see yourself as a good person, worthy of heaven on your own merit.

Yet, if any one of us were to take a step back and view our life in relation to God's perfect love, pure holiness, and majestic power—we would quickly understand how

we pale in comparison. In fact, the Lord's holy radiance would not only expose our sin and foolish thinking, but it would obliterate every false thing in which we have placed our hopes. Remember, an idol is anything that gets your ultimate trust.

2. The Bible says that God dwells "in light so brilliant that no human can approach Him" (see 1 Timothy 6:16), and yet, in God's unfailing love and mercy, He has chosen to draw near to us through His Son, the Lord Jesus. Who is Jesus Christ to you?

While Christ-followers love to sing about the precious, powerful name of Jesus, His name can stir up great anger and cause great division among many. Why is this?

Think about how much time do you spend behind the screen versus literal "face-time" with your spouse or someone you dearly love—son, daughter, parent, friend, grandbaby, co-worker. Would you be willing to put down your phone or get out from behind your computer or television screen during this season of Lent? What would it take for you to reduce your time on technology and increase your time with your spouse or children?

In the Old Testament, every firstborn male of the flock or herd belonged to God. And every son of Israel was to be bought back at the redemption price. To this day in Jewish homes, a priest will ask the father of the firstborn baby boy, "Do you desire this child or the five shekels?" And if the father seeks to redeem the child, he will buy back his son at the redemption price. Our families matter to God.

Consider why you are pulled toward an impersonal device versus personal interaction. Perhaps one reason is that personal interaction can get real and messy. The Lord was willing to leave heaven's glory and enter into this world. Jesus interacted with people whose lives were a mess. He was received by some, but rejected by many others. And yet, He came to pay the price for redemption.

3. Each campus pastor of Christ Church invited every worshiper to begin a 40-Day fast for Lent, the season Christians observe from Ash Wednesday until Easter. To participate in these three observances, consider:
 - a) Having no technology during mealtime with friends or family. This means no T.V. during meals, no smart phones, texting. Focus upon conversation only with friends and family.
 - b) No technology in the bedroom when going to bed, or immediately getting up from bed. (Often people check Facebook immediately instead of getting on our face before God by reading the One Year Bible, prayer and devotion. Learn to unwind without t.v.)
 - c) Spend 15 to 20 minutes less on technology and instead, commit to intercessory prayer for others each day. Lift up unchurched persons in your workplace, family, neighborhood, and school. Pray for those who are hurting or need encouragement.

Are you willing to participate in this 40-Day Tech Fast? Whether it is fasting from t.v., iPads, smart phones or social media it is vital to focus upon the people immediately around us.

4. In closing, discuss what this fast would look like for you and those you care about. How could this have a positive impact (1) on your relationship with God and (2) upon your relationship with those your love?

Now, pray for each other in the group that you will be able to be faithful in this 40-Day experience of faithfulness.

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Text: Numbers 3:40-51

The Plain Truth

Gratitude transforms our _____ from the “Next Best Thing” to the “_____”.

I commit to the 40-Day Technology Fast.

Specific Suggestions for Committing to a Technology Fast:

1. We will not take our technology to the meal time (not watching t.v. or using phones).
2. We will not take our technology into bed with us (not going to bed on phone, or waking up on phone). Spend time with God before using your phone.
3. Engage in a technology fast by spending at least 15 to 20 minutes to intercede or pray for others during this time frame. Pray for unchurched friends, co-workers, neighbors, family and students.
4. Practice gratitude by serving someone with an act of kindness each day. A phone call, a note of encouragement, a kind deed, etc.

One Year Bible Readings

Mar. 5: Numbers 4:1-5:31, Mark 12:18-37, Psalm 48:1-14, Proverbs 10:26
Mar. 6: Numbers 6:1-7:89, Mark 12:38-13:13, Psalm 49:1-20, Proverbs 10:27-28
Mar. 7: Numbers 8:1-9:23, Mark 13:14-37, Psalm 50:1-23, Proverbs 10:29-30
Mar. 8: Numbers 10:1-11:23, Mark 14:1-2, Psalm 51:1-19, Proverbs 10:31-32
Mar. 9: Numbers 11:24-13:33, Mark 14:22-52, Psalm 52:1-9, Proverbs 11:1-3
Mar. 10: Numbers 14:1-15:16, Mark 14:53-72, Psalm 53:1-6, Proverbs 11:4
Mar. 11: Numbers 15:17-16:40, Mark 15:1-47, Psalm 54:1-7, Proverbs 11:5-6

March 4 & 5, 2017