

connected **3D**

Technology brings many benefits to our lives. But excessive screen time can create a flat, one-dimensional existence. We were made for the rich, three-dimensional experience of relationship with God and one another. So, while technology is great for some types of communication, it is no substitute for real-world, face-to-face connection.

Do you control your devices or are they starting to control you? How about your family? In a culture where everyone seems more “connected” than ever, how do we nurture real connection with the most important people in our lives?

Replace negative technology habits with healthy patterns by connecting 3D:

- **Disconnect to Connect:** Choose specific times and locations to consistently disconnect from devices in order to connect with God, family and friends.
- **Deepen Internal Values:** Model and coach your family toward God-honoring technology habits.
- **Develop External Boundaries:** Find and set the right safety and accountability strategy for yourself and everyone in your home.

1 disconnect

disconnect to connect

The goal is not just less screen time, but more real connection. Start two simple strategies to shift the balance in your family life.

TECH-FREE ZONES

Choose several “tech-free zones” where the family agrees to put away devices in order to enhance real-life connection. Select from the following zones or come up with your own. Consider placing a basket in each location for everyone to drop their devices as they enter.

1. **Mealtime:** Include the table at home and in restaurants so that every mealtime can foster face-to-face conversation.
2. **Drive Time:** Rather than everyone retreating into his or her device, use the time driving together to connect, pray for the day ahead or hear about everyone’s high and low point during the day. (Some exceptions may apply, such as limited use during long distance travel, etc.)
3. **Date Time:** Give your undivided attention to your spouse during dates. It is ok if you need to check your phone to be sure the sitter is not trying to reach you, but then go right back to enjoying time together.

REAL CONNECTION IDEAS

While reducing tech time, increase the time you spend together as a couple, a family or with friends. Choose from the following ideas or come up with your own for making memories and conversation.

- Play a board game together
- Cook a meal together
- Play a sport together
- Go for a walk or bike ride together
- Read a book aloud to the children as they turn pages
- Do a service project together

2 deepen

deepen internal values

You can set great external boundaries for your family, but what happens when there is a way around those boundaries or they are not in place at a friend’s house? It is just as important, if not more, to set internal values that act as a compass to guide you and your family when navigating technology decisions. Internal values set the foundation and provide context for discussing external boundaries.

Lead this process in the following three ways:

1. **Model It:** The old saying “more is caught than taught” applies here. Start by evaluating your own technology choices. Let your family see you living out healthy habits rooted in Christian virtue. When you mess up as we all do, be authentic by admitting your mistakes and using them to prompt conversation about values.
2. **Discuss It:** Use everyday situations to discuss your beliefs and values with your family. For example, if you are searching YouTube together and inappropriate content pops up, stop and talk about why we should protect our eyes and minds. On the positive side, share an encouraging text or post that you have seen to prompt a conversation about using technology in a God-honoring manner.
3. **Read It:** Read key scriptures together as a foundation for setting internal values and helping children see that it is not just because mom or dad say so. It is in pursuit of God’s best for us.

For example:

GUARD YOUR MIND: Philippians 4:8

SETTING TIME LIMITS: 1 Corinthians 6:12

INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT: Psalm 101:3-4

POSTING ABOUT/TO OTHERS: Ephesians 4:15, 29



3 develop

develop external boundaries

We can do a lot to protect ourselves, as well as family and friends, from the many temptations and pitfalls associated with technology. Parents have the greatest level of responsibility to set guardrails for their children that will help support and protect them as they use these powerful but potentially dangerous devices. Here are several simple steps to help protect you and your family:

- 1. Learn the Device:** Get to know the good and the bad about your devices before activating them. Learn to set restrictions by taking advantage of built-in safeguards.
- 2. Set Rules:** Discuss and sign the “Connected Family Contract”
- 3. Find Helps:** Research and invest in safety, accountability programs and resources such as the following:

Tools to restrict and monitor browsing activity:

- **CovenantEyes.com**- Accountability and filtering. Use the promo code CONNECTED for a free 30-day trial.
- **Mobicip.com**- Mobile web filtering.

Tools to set and monitor time limits on devices:

- **Parent TimeLock App**
- **Kaboom App**

3D PLEDGE

I/We pledge to Disconnect to Connect, Deepen Internal Values and Develop External Boundaries to become more Connected 3D.

GOING FURTHER

- *Plugged in Parenting* by Bob Waliszewski
- *Logged in and Tuned Out* by Vicki Courtney
- *Should I Just Smash My Kid's Phone* by Doug Fields & Jonathan McKee
- *Biblically Handling Technology and Social Media* by Biblical Discipleship Ministries

Suggested apps for positive technology use:

- **PluggedIn** (Website and App)- Reviews of movies, videos, music, TV, and games from a Christian perspective.
- **Parent Cue App**- Reinforce what your children are learning at church with drive time, mealtime, bedtime ideas and more.
- **Cleantunes App**- Helps you edit profanity and other objectionable content out of your music.
- **Bible App**- Bible reading plans, reminders and devotional content.
- **Air1 App**- Find current popular Christian music and daily encouragement.

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Using technology in a God-honoring way

