

[**Author Note:** Say something about the newest iOS that has come out.]

So, the update only took three days, but now my phone has iOS 12.0. It can do everything! Do you need to surf the web? Check! Do you want to surf on a real surf board? Yep, it can do that. In fact, this morning my iPhone made me breakfast and brushed my teeth for me. That’s right. They’re waterproof now, so they can do that.

Of course I’m just joking, but aren’t these devices amazing? What is something crazy that your phone can do that you can’t believe?

[**Author Note:** Talk about the first time you got a cell phone.]

Have you noticed that technology is just always evolving and seems really hard to keep up with? I know you guys don’t remember this at all, but when I was in high school, cell phones were just becoming a new thing. No one had one. They weren’t even smart yet. They hadn’t evolved to that level of intelligence. They were still just a single-celled technology. I guess that’s why we called them “cell phones.”

There was no such thing as texting. In fact, I vividly remember the day that my mom and dad decided that I needed a cell phone. A cell phone salesman actually came to our house. He convinced my mom and dad that it was a good thing for me to have one in case there was an emergency.

So, they got me a phone. It was a huge brick of a thing with a pullout antenna. It had a narrow, small, black-and-white screen. And not a SINGLE GAME. This thing didn’t even have “Snake”! Yeah, this was the dark ages.

Can you guess how much I used it? Never! Not one time did I ever need to call my mom or dad. And I couldn’t call my friends, because none of them had one. All of them were at school with me. Can you imagine just leaving your phone off and in your backpack all day? Crazy, right?! The only time my phone would ring was when my dad was in the other room and wanted to “test it out.” \*ring ring\* “Yep, Dad, it still works.”

Have you ever seen some of that older technology. Can you imagine carrying around *this* to school every day?

[**Author Note:** Show some pictures of random pieces of technology from when you were a kid, and ask if they have any idea what those things are. Below are some of the things I used.]

* Bag phone
* VCR or LaserDisc
* Tiger video games
* Bulletin Board websites

The challenge I faced back then was not the same challenge you all face today. Not even close! Back then, I had to ask myself why I even needed a cell phone. My only worry was that it would weigh down my backpack. I mean, those things were really heavy.

Today, the technology is lighter, but the challenge that technology puts on us is so much bigger. Today, we don’t wonder if we’re ever going to use technology. We have to use it! Most of your parents wouldn’t even let you walk out of the house without a smart phone.

Today, we wonder if we’re using it for the right reasons. The challenge facing you all is so much greater today—your challenge is, do you use technology to distract yourself, or to educate yourself? Do you use technology to connect to people, or to detach from people? Will you use technology to encourage others, or gossip about them? Your challenge is, will you use technology to glorify the Lord?

Look with me at this verse. It’s going to be the foundation of what we’re going to talk about for the next few weeks:

**Colossians 3:17**

*And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.*

Today, we are starting a new series called *What Would Jesus Text?* The question we’re trying to answer is this, “How would Jesus honor God with all of the technology we have available to us today?”

**The Technology God**

Who can tell me what an idol is?

Have you ever wondered how idols came to be? Like, what would drive someone to just invent a fake god?

Let me tell you. People often wanted explanations for things without wanting to honor God, so they would make up fake gods. If you wondered where the rain came from and you didn’t want to admit it was the real God, but you still wanted water for your crops, then you would just pray to Dagon. If you wanted to have some kids, you would worship Baal or Ashtoreth. And each of these false gods could be anything you wanted, and if they didn’t do what you wanted, then you could just make another one until something good happened.

Are you feeling really hungry late at night? Boom! Here is Jeff, the god of pizza. Uh oh … you gained a few pounds? Boom! Here is Doug, the god of abs. Plus, these gods could be found in wooden or stone statues or poles, like totems. If you wanted a god, you could just buy one or make one yourself.

Think about how similar those false gods are to today’s technology …

* Both are convenient and helpful.
* Both are on us or around us all the time.
* Both are way more fun than the older version, and always fresh!

I think this pastor, Tim Challies, really nailed it when he defined idols. He said, “Idols are often those good things in our life that want to become the ultimate things.” I love that definition. It’s so true.

**Good Things from Technology**

Technology can be a very good thing, can’t it? What are some good things technology has done?

[**Author Note:** Share a personal story here if you have one. Or, if you don’t have one, you could just research how some surgeries are done today and the technology that makes it possible.]

**Medicine:**Medical technology is amazing, right? Several years ago, my dad had to have a triple bypass surgery. My mom and I were really nervous sitting in the waiting room, and the doctor came in later and told us that everything went fine. And then, he proceeded to tell us what they actually did.

Through the use of lasers and freezing technology, they were able to actually remove my dad’s heart from his body, fix it, and put it back inside him! That was admittedly kinda gross, but it totally blew my mind!

**Safety:** Did you know that the invention of cell phones has greatly increased the response time for ambulances, police, and tornado/hurricane warnings? But, in some major cities, there are so many cell signals going out that emergency-response people have to make their own cell towers so there’s no interference.

[**Author Note:** More than likely, you can think of a “dead zone” in your community that the students could relate to.]

**Connection:** There are so many more amazing things that technology can do. You can connect with friends and family from almost anywhere in the world. Except in the middle of the Walmart downtown. That place is a dead zone. Every time my wife sends me there to pick something up, I walk in talking on the phone with her, and by the time I reach frozen foods, it’s just static.

**Education:** With your phone, you can learn almost anything. You literally have the world’s most powerful search engine just one swipe or touch away.

**Bible:** And lastly, let’s not forget that because almost everyone has a smart phone or computer now, the Bible is easily accessible and in millions of more hands today than it ever was!

So, is technology a good thing? Of course it’s a good thing! But what happens when it becomes the *ultimate* thing?

The most famous idol the Israelites ever made was the golden calf. Read this story with me.

**Exodus 32:1–6 (NIV)**

*When the people saw that Moses was so long in coming down from the mountain, they gathered around Aaron and said, “Come, make us gods who will go before us. As for this fellow Moses who brought us up out of Egypt, we don’t know what has happened to him.”*

*Aaron answered them, “Take off the gold earrings that your wives, your sons and your daughters are wearing, and bring them to me.” So all the people took off their earrings and brought them to Aaron. He took what they handed him and made it into an idol cast in the shape of a calf, fashioning it with a tool. Then they said, “These are your gods, Israel, who brought you up out of Egypt.”*

*When Aaron saw this, he built an altar in front of the calf and announced, “Tomorrow there will be a festival to the Lord.” So the next day the people rose early and sacrificed burnt offerings and presented fellowship offerings. Afterward they sat down to eat and drink and got up to indulge in revelry.*

I think it’s really interesting that this new idol for the Israelites leads them to “rise up and play.” Isn’t that what technology-idols tend to do in our lives? They are made for such amazingly good things, but we just want them for play!

I mean, I have a smartphone in my pocket that can tell me anything about anything in the world. With a simple up swipe, I can research how to help people in Africa get water. In fact, I could even send money to a water charity from my phone right now! But do you know what actually wears down my battery the most on my phone? … YouTube videos! [Replace with whatever uses up the most battery on your phone.] What wears down your battery the most?

So, here’s a question: where did the Israelites even get the gold to make the golden calf? Weren’t they slaves in Egypt? Why would slaves have gold?

The answer is actually found in **Exodus 12:35–36**.

*The Israelites did as Moses instructed and asked the Egyptians for articles of silver and gold and for clothing. The Lord had made the Egyptians favorably disposed toward the people, and they gave them what they asked for; so they plundered the Egyptians.*

They actually got the gold from the Egyptians through God. God intended for the Israelites to get paid for all their years of slavery as they left Egypt. And Israel decided to repay God by taking his good gift and making it into an idol.

And notice that they not only rose up to play with the idol, they actually declared that this idol, this false god, was what had saved them and brought them out of Egypt. Was that true? Of course not! And that’s the problem with the technology god. Technology hasn’t actually taken us anywhere. God has!

Technology has not carried us into a new age of wisdom and wonder—God has by *using* technology! Technology has not saved anyone—God has! Technology may make us more comfortable, but it doesn’t make us better. God makes things better, and ultimately the best. Look at what James 1:17 says

**James 1:17**

*Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights.*

Every good thing technology has ever done in our lives is really a gift from God.

**Closing Challenge**

Technology is definitely a good thing in your life, but has it become the ultimate thing? Has it become a technology god? A technology idol? Does it cause you to rise up and play and ignore the real God who can really change your life? Is that cell phone in your pocket or your hand causing you to ignore the Scriptures, God’s own words, that we’ve been reading?

When it comes to the question WWJT (what would Jesus text) … what would Jesus do with the technology we have today?

The answer is that He wouldn’t make it greater than God. Do not forget all that God has given you. Every good thing, especially Jesus and especially Jesus’s shed blood on the cross, are for you. Nothing can ever be more important than that. Things become a god in our lives when we set our affections on them more than on the true God, more than on Christ and His sacrifice. Do you need to change your affections?

Sometimes that means we limit our time with that thing—that phone or that computer. Sometimes that means we increase our time with God. And sometimes, just like the Israelites had to destroy the idol and taste how bitter that was to lose that precious gold that God had given them … sometimes, we likewise need to just kill our Facebook or Instagram or Snapchat account.

Sometimes, we—because that idol has become so big—need to just hand the phone to Mom and Dad and say, “Please take it away,” or, “Please lock out these apps.” Don’t get me wrong; I’m not advocating that you go home and destroy the expensive devices that your parents have bought you. What I *am* advocating is that you love God more than them, and maybe do the hard but humble thing of asking Mom and Dad to help you put the idol down.

I want to challenge you this week to do two things.

1. Be real and ask yourself, “Am I worshiping the technology god more than the real God?” If so, pray and take action! God is worth so much more than a hunk of plastic and glass. If you’re serious about your walk with the Lord, then be serious.

2. Whenever you would be tempted this week to let time with technology take the place over time with the Lord in prayer or reading the Bible, log on to your social media and just post #GodIsGreater. Then, log off and spend time with the God who is real, the God who is greater.

Your leaders here love you and here for you. Idols can be serious business, so if you need to talk with someone, talk to us.

Let’s pray.

**Possible Discussion Questions**

1. What technology do we have today that you think will be obsolete, and kids won’t even recognize, in 10 years?

2. Have you ever gotten into trouble because of some kind of technology? Computer? Cell phone? TV?

3. Has God ever used technology in your life to show you something about Him? Bring you closer to Him? To help you minister to others?