

GROWING IN GRACE

# INSIDE OUT

INTENTIONALLY LIVING  
A TRANSPARENT LIFE IN  
THE DIGITAL WORLD



*So, whether you eat or drink,  
or whatever you do,  
do all to the glory of God.  
1 Corinthians 10:31*

NORTHWEST BAPTIST CHURCH  
February 2023



# FOUR IMPORTANT QUESTIONS

Tony Reinke | DesiringGod.com

Specifically, technology cannot answer these four questions:

Who am I?

What am I here for?

What am I called to do?

Am I succeeding or failing at it?

Technology will not answer these four foundational questions of life. *Scripture does.*

# LIVING WELL IN A DIGITAL WORLD

Tim Challies | Challies.com

## REJECT DISTRACTION, EMBRACE FOCUS

Put off the distraction that pollutes this digital world and instead embrace deep focus. It is no great secret that this digital world brings all kinds of new ways to be distracted. Our technologies seem to evolve toward distraction, so that every new generation of device finds new ways to call us away from one thing and toward another. Our devices beep, buzz, flash, and chirp—whatever they need to do to gain our attention. Over time we have trained ourselves to obey them, which makes me wonder: If we need to respond to our phones every time they beep or buzz, do we own them, or do they own us? As our devices evolve toward distraction, my concern is that we are becoming people who love and long for distraction. We enjoy those distractions and almost come to depend upon them.

There is a cost to this. As Christians we are responsible to grow in wisdom, but wisdom comes only with effort. Information is easy—we are surrounded by it all the time—, but wisdom comes through concentration and meditation, and through carefully applying the truths of Scripture to our lives. How can we meditate and concentrate if we are always distracted? I used a printed Bible for many years and it never once beeped or buzzed or otherwise distracted me. But when I read the Bible on my phone, I am only ever a flash or chirp away from being completely side-tracked. I am only ever a click or swipe away from indulging in Netflix or YouTube or any other number of distractions.

The consistent call of the Bible is to be people who ponder God's Word, who ponder the world around us, and who constantly grow in wisdom. We can only do this when we break away from our distractions and choose to focus. So Christian, put off distraction and put on concentration and meditation. Control your devices so they serve you as you grow in wisdom and grow in godliness.

## REJECT ISOLATION, EMBRACE VISIBILITY

Put off the isolation of anonymity and put on the accountability that comes with visibility..

It is easy for us to inhabit places where we are anonymous, where we lose all of that accountability that comes through visibility.

When you are alone, when it is just you, your computer, and the Internet, who are you? What do you do? How do you behave? Do you indulge in pornography? Do you indulge in rumor and gossip? Do you read things you have no business reading or do things you have no business doing? And so much of this happens because people refuse and reject visibility. They do not open up their lives to Christian brothers or sisters, and they do not seek input and counsel from others. They use their digital technologies to feed the flesh instead of serve the Lord.

Christian, you need to reject the isolation that comes so easily in this digital world, and in its place you need to embrace visibility. You need to have people who will speak into your life, and you need to listen. You need to live the same life online as you live offline. You need to be the same person behind your screen as away from it. Put off anonymity and put on accountability.

## REJECT INDULGENCE, EMBRACE SELF-CONTROL

Finally, you need to put off indulgence and in its place put on self-control. Every year the *Oxford English Dictionary* evaluates the English language, and chooses some old words to remove and a few new words to add. It seems significant that in new edition they added *binge-watch*. "Binge-watch: Watch multiple episodes of (a television program) in rapid succession, typically by means of DVDs or digital streaming." *Binge* does not strike me as the kind of word that ought to be associated with Christians, yet who hasn't fallen prey at one time or another, especially now that the newest trend in television is not to release episodes week-by-week, but to release an entire series at once. This is binge-watching, and it is just one of the ways we allow ourselves indulgence in this digital world. There are many more we could talk about: compulsively checking email, or checking Facebook hundreds of times each day, or even feeling the necessity to respond to every single text message. And it makes me wonder, whatever happened to self-control?

I have said before that self-control is lost virtue (or a misplaced one, anyway). Yet the Bible consistently calls us to self-control and even says that it is an undeniable and irreplaceable fruit of the Spirit. "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control..." Meanwhile, this fast-paced digital world caters to our ugly desire for indulgence. But here's the thing: Once we relax self-control in one area of life, we allow the spirit of indulgence to creep in, and we are never far from letting go of control in other areas. So much of what our digital world brings us is good, but like so much else, it is good only in moderation.

Put to death those compulsive behaviors, and bring to life the fruit of the Spirit. Take ownership of your devices and all of your great technologies before they take ownership of you.

If you tend to be the one catching up on texts, emails and social media instead of simply being completely present with your husband, kids, or friends here are four ideas to get less entangled by technology and more connected to your loved ones:



*Be still, and know that I am God;  
I will be exalted among the nations,  
I will be exalted in the earth.  
Psalm 46:10*

# BE STILL, MY SCREENS

Girlfriends in God | Crosswalk.com

The temptation to constantly use screens is all around you. Smart phones and tablets are portable, right by your side throughout the day. The screen world is enticing because it promises something new with every interaction.

Are we listening to the voices coming out of our smart phones and computers more than we are listening to God's voice?

If you are living with anxiety, stress or fear, perhaps it is time to still your screens. Unplug the modem. Limit your time on social media. Turn the television off. Instead, be still before the God *who calms the storm so its waves are still* (Psalm 107:29). Only He can calm the turbulence in your heart.

Screens often distract us from putting our focus on Christ. Think about the environment of your home. Is it a place where you can be quiet before the Lord to think about His goodness? Or is each room permeated by pixels, chimes, and ringtones?

Maybe it's time to still your screens.

And in those pockets of quiet, you make space for God to reveal Himself to you. You make space to join the chorus of praise described in Revelation 15:3, *They sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying: Great and marvelous are Your works, Lord God Almighty! Just and true are Your ways, O King of the saints!*

When you are still, you realize anew that He is God. Make it your aim to be still in an overly wired, 24/7, always-on world. Tune out from technology on a regular basis to tune in to His still, small voice.

Evaluate how dependent you are on your screens - your phone, social networks, computer, tablet, or television. Would you feel lost if you didn't have your phone and connection to the Internet for one day? Ask the Lord to help you put screens in their proper place in your life.

Is technology bringing your family and friends closer together or driving you farther apart?

# DIGITAL VEGETABLES VS. DIGITAL CANDY

Arlene Pellicane | D6 Podcast

Discuss digital vegetable vs digital candy - you can also overeat vegetables

You shall have no other gods before me. You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. You shall not bow down to them or serve them, for I the Lord your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and the fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments.

Exodus 20:3-6

Little children, keep yourselves from idols.

1 John 5:21

The idols of the nations are silver and gold, the work of human hands. They have mouths, but do not speak; they have eyes, but do not see; they have ears, but do not hear, nor is there any breath in their mouths. Those who make them become like them, so do all who trust in them!

Psalms 135:15-18

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.

Colossians 3:17

## HOW CAN YOU HONOR THE LORD WITH YOUR TECHNOLOGY?

In an average year, 15-23 year olds, will see things in *digital Babylon ~2700 hours*

In comparison, they will have *~291 hours of positive, spiritual input*

(from Barna research on digital Babylon)

Tech makes us impatient with communication. In prayer, we might not have an immediate response

Being a Christian grandparent vs intentional Christian grandparent means having a plan and being proactive

## SIMPLIFYING AND GETTING HEALTHY RHYTHMS

- **Challenge:** turn off phone 1 hour a day, 1 day a month, 1 week a year
- Face-to-face connection is vital
- 5 digital habits:
  - H** - hold down the off button (turn off phone, put it in the other room, digital sabbath)
  - A** - always put people first (when they walk in the room look up and connect with person; set an example)
    - Pivot - when you hear someone you look up and engage
  - B** - brush your conscience (clean me, repent, is my heart unsettled)
  - I** - I will go online with purpose
  - T** - take a hike and be in His Creation

50% of technology users will click on a notification within 30 seconds of receiving it  
(from the *Association of Computing Machinery*)

# DAILY TECHNOLOGY BEST PRACTICES

WatchGuard | PandaSecurity.com

Creating general media rules to follow throughout your day create routines and healthy boundaries with technology so you can feel more satisfied.

- **Make Media Rules:** Implement family media agreements for everyone in the household to manage expectations of media use and encourage healthy online activity.
- **Encourage Face-to-Face Interactions:** when you're with company, make an agreement not to use technology and embrace being in the moment.
- **Detox:** Take time to disconnect completely from technology, whether a day, a weekend or a full week.
- **Don't Use Devices In Routines:** Eat breakfast before using your devices and avoid using your phone or computer as an alarm clock.

## AFTERNOON TECHNOLOGY BEST PRACTICES

When you're in the mid-day slump, the last thing you need are negative reminders from notifications and social media. Cut out the excess technology for an afternoon boost.

- **Mute And Block:** avoid content from negative accounts by muting and blocking where applicable and use the "show less often" feature for irrelevant ads.
- **Limit Notifications:** Manage which apps can send notifications, and turn off applications that don't warrant an immediate response.
- **Manage Usage:** understand where the majority of your time spent on technology goes, gauge usage, then create relevant screen time limits.

## EVENING TECHNOLOGY BEST PRACTICES

The National Sleep Foundation reports that using technology too soon before bed decreases the natural production of the hormone melatonin, which aids restful sleep.

- **Use Do Not Disturb:** turn your devices to do not disturb at night and when completing large tasks.
- **Respect Sleep:** remove technology from the bedroom and avoid using media devices an hour before bed.

# HOW TO PRACTICE INTENTIONAL LIVING IN A DIGITAL WORLD

Jessica Jueckstock | MommyKnowsTech.com

**The key to living a balanced tech life, I believe, is intentional living.**

But how do you live intentionally in a digital world?

How often have you found yourself staring at your phone instead of interacting with the person right in front of you? Or logged in to Facebook to “just check one thing” and suddenly found yourself having wasted 30 minutes?

What is intentional living?

**Intentional living means you know what you value.** You know your goals for your life, and you make decisions with those goals in mind. The decisions you make support and uphold those goals.

Intentional living is not just a one-time thing. It doesn't mean you have your whole life figured out. It's a process of growth as you continue to learn more about what you value and what's important to your interactions with the people you love most. **It's about having a purpose for the things you do.**

**So how do you start the process of intentional living?**

### 1. Intentional living starts with examining your life.

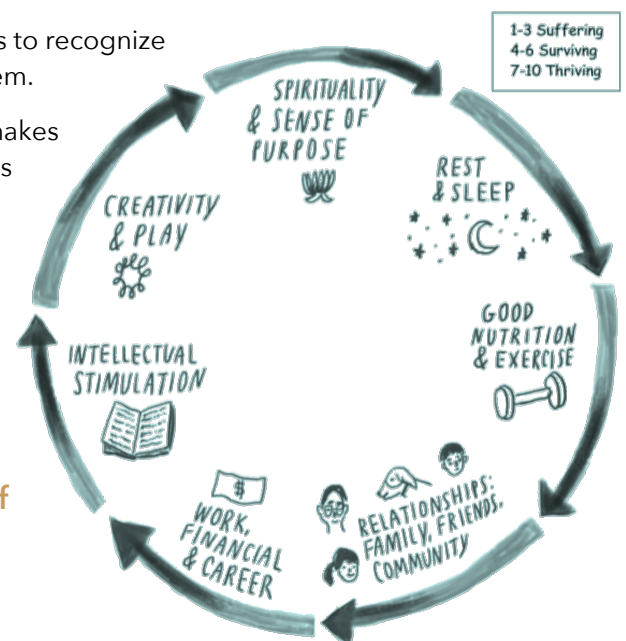
The self-help experts always say the first step to solving a problem is to recognize we have one, right? So let's talk about where we may see the problem.

Think about your life right now. Where are you living in a way that makes you unhappy? Self examination can be painful, but identifying what's wrong is the first step to making it right. Have you been letting life happen to you instead of making choices that bring you joy?

As you go through this exercise, take a moment to really think on each section so that you are staring the problem straight in the face. Don't hide from it. But then—this is important—don't dwell on the problem. Don't wallow in guilt. *Start thinking about the solution.*

### 2. Decide what's important to you and your definition of intentional living.

## MY BALANCE WHEEL





### 3. Intentional living means remembering your values and assessing often.

It doesn't do any good to define what's important to you if you don't take steps to remind yourself of what you've decided. We are forgetful creatures and easily distracted.

### 4. The key to joy-filled intentional living: own what makes you unique.

#### How can technology support you in your journey to intentional living?

I don't want this article to read like an argument against technology. Because it's not that. There are many ways that technology can *help* us to live more intentionally.

- Set phone alarms to remind you of your values.
- Listen to motivational audiobooks.
- Download a Bible app.
- Use the internet to find resources or interact in support groups for dealing with mental health issues.
- Try a [blog](#) or YouTube as an outlet for your creativity.
- Fitness apps, workout videos on YouTube, and fitness gadgets can help you keep up with your physical health-I love my [fitbit](#)!
- Social media, texting, and video chat can help keep you connected with the people you love most.
- Use a OneNote bullet journal or to-do list to stay organized and productive.

This is why I believe **intentional living in a digital world is about balance**-it starts with recognizing where technology may be keeping you from what you truly value. Then, once you know what values you want to live your life by, make a point of using technology in a way that it only supports your values.

## WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO LIVE INTENTIONALLY?

Shante Grossett | Christian Living

Living intentionally means to purposefully pursue the life God has called you to live. Intentionality requires deliberate action. God is intentional and he has called us to be the same.

In Psalm 139:13-16, the Psalmist praises God for his intentionality in creating human beings. God took an "unformed substance" and created something out of it.

**"Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations." PSALM 139:13-16**

Likewise, God has a plan for your life and he wants you to be intentional about it.

#### God has a purpose for our lives

I'm sure you've probably heard this a million times but it's true: God has a purpose for our lives. His purpose is for us to live for him and glorify him in everything we do.

**The end of the matter; all has been heard. Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man. ECCLESIASTES 12:13 ESV**

This is the reason why we were created. We must choose to intentionally pursue this purpose each day.

### **God's version of intentionality vs. the world's version of intentionality**

The world tells us that living intentionally means to work hard at creating the life we want. Make all the lists, buy all the planners, and land the perfect job. It will have you burnt out and burdened down because no matter how hard you work, you can't live intentionally without putting God first. Biblical intentionality on the other hand involves making a daily choice to glorify God through our lives.

### **What does the Bible say about living with intention?**

**If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit. GALATIANS 5:25 ESV**

In a nutshell, this is what it means to live with intention. We keep in step with God's spirit. We follow him closely and go where he chooses to lead us.

If I try to carve a life for myself, failure is inevitable. However, if I let the Spirit lead me, my life will have purpose and meaning. While we have limited perspectives, God has an infinite perspective. He sees and knows everything. He knows what is best for us. If we "keep in step with the Spirit," we will most certainly live out the purpose God has for us.

**Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, making the best use of the time, because the days are evil. EPHESIANS 5:15-16 ESV**

Here the Apostle Paul reminds us to live our lives carefully and with wisdom. He encourages us to make the most of the time we have to live for Jesus. The days are evil and we have an opportunity to shine the light of Jesus into the world.

Now, this doesn't mean to be hyper-spiritual. It just means, if you're going to lunch with a co-worker, remember Jesus. If you're watching a good movie, remember Jesus. If you're on vacation, remember Jesus.

### **Why do we sometimes struggle to live intentionally?**

Honestly, I see three common reasons why we struggle to live intentionally. We don't know who we are, we are lukewarm in our faith, or we are running from God.

#### ***We don't know who we are***

Think about it. How can one live intentionally when she doesn't know who she is? We discover who we are by being rooted in Christ and in God's word. We learn who we are by getting to know God. When we spend time with him, he reveals each "step" that he wants us to take. If you want to live intentionally, get to know God and let him teach you who you are through his word.

#### ***We are lukewarm in our faith***

A lukewarm Christian has one foot in the world and one foot in the church. They are double minded, and according to James 1:8, "unstable in all [their] ways." If intentionality means to pursue the purpose God has for us, then intentionality is impossible for a double minded Christian. A person straddling the fence is stuck in one place and cannot move towards any purpose. If you think you might be a lukewarm Christian, decide to choose God or the world. You can't have both.

## ***We are running from God***

You can't live out God's purpose for your life if you are running from him. Perhaps you know him and you feel him pulling you towards him, but you choose to ignore his voice. You cannot live intentionally this way. You have to turn back to him and surrender. Recognize that he has the best in mind for you. It won't always be easy but if you turn to him, your life will have meaning.

### **How can you begin living intentionally?**

**I have set the Lord always before me; because he is at my right hand, I shall not be shaken. PSALM 16:8 ESV**

Keep your eyes on God and look to him for direction. Stay in his word. He will show you the way.

I mentioned earlier that we should keep in step with the Spirit. Follow his lead closely and listen to what he tells you to do.

Make an effort to honor him through everything that you do.

Here's a very practical tip. Consider everything you do, and ask, "Does this honor or dishonor God?"

"Am I doing this to glorify myself (or others) or am I doing this to glorify God?" Even the smallest things should point back to God.

Finally, be purposeful and deliberate in your pursuit of God.

While intentional living is simple, it's not easy. Life is filled with ups and downs and our hearts need to be constantly renewed and transformed to be like Christ's. However, if we welcome God to do the transforming even when it's hard, we will be on the right path to living an intentional life.

So, let me ask you - are you living intentionally? Or are you going through the motions? What would it look like to practically pursue God's purpose for your life every single day?

## **PRACTICAL TIPS FOR BEING A CHRISTIAN IN A DIGITAL WORLD**

MoodyCenter.org

1. **Create an offline outlet** - Social media tempts us to respond in the moment. It prompts us to react, speak, and pile on even if our opinions aren't particularly informed (Prov. 8:8; 10:11; 15:18; 29:9; James 1:19-21). Rather than responding in the moment, it can be useful to create an offline outlet to write down and reflect on your thoughts, sort through your emotions, and decide whether you should post your comment or not.
2. **Break the rules** - Every social interaction, whether online or face-to-face, has implicit and explicit rules. One of the expectations of social media is that you will engage. When Facebook and Twitter added "like" and "retweet" functions that would measure post engagement, they changed the rules of the platform to encourage a response. You are under no obligation to

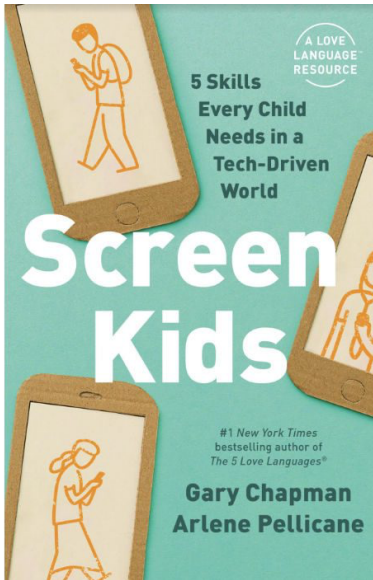
respond. You can read posts or check out pictures without liking them or sharing them. Break those rules.

3. **Know the limits** - Can you imagine sitting in the middle of a rock concert to read a book? There is a reason libraries are generally quiet. The environment matters. Social media is no different. Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram are environments that are more conducive for certain activities and less conducive for others. Stretching the platforms beyond their limits isn't likely to produce great outcomes. Understanding that these platforms aren't designed to cultivate robust discourse or to have reasoned, well-thought-out discussions is important. It can help you set your expectations about how to use social media platforms.
4. **Be intentional** - Time fillers can quickly become time wasters. Recently, I've been taking steps to ignore my phone. I leave it on silent, set specific vibrations for text messages from my wife and kids, turn off all notifications for email and other apps, and leave my phone at home whenever I'm going to dinner or planning to spend time with my family. I've also muted or unfollowed posts that were tempting me to react in ways that would have been less-than wise. The point is that social media can have some utility. I, for instance, enjoy getting new workout ideas on Instagram. That's basically all I do on the platform, so I've intentionally limited my feed so that I only get what I want when I want it. Being intentional with your social media means you'll need to reflect on how you want it to be part of your life. What purpose does it serve and is it serving that purpose? Beyond that, how is social media keeping me from doing other activities that might be more crucial for your spiritual growth? These are important questions. Answering them and setting controls on your social media platform is a great way to begin being intentional about your social media use.
5. **Take Stock** - It can be easy to assume that life is good enough. We can put off for tomorrow reading God's word, picking up a theology book, or spending time in concentrated prayer. Our spouses and kids understand that we are busy and can't spend more time with them. They will allow the distraction, so it seems ok. . .until its not. Take a minute and really consider how interacting on social media changes who you are and how you think. Take stock of how you are loving God with all you are and have and loving your neighbor as yourself. If social media isn't adding to one of those two things, why are you on it? Why not engage in activities that will make you a more faithful disciple of Christ?
6. **Learn to Resist** - Many years ago I wrote an unpublished essay on resistance as a form of Christian formation. The general idea is that if we are to be conformed to the image of Christ, we have to resist being conformed to anything else. That doesn't mean we are to become uniform robots without any unique character. We are unique. Christians conform to Christ in a context. We adapt to our environment. Still, we have to resist being formed into people who diminish God or refuse to interact with others in ways that are God-honoring. We must ensure that our loyalties to organizations, families, local churches, denominations, don't overshadow our loyalty to Christ.
7. **Carry a Physical Bible** - This piece of advice might seem strange when thinking about how to interact on social media. Carrying a physical Bible offers a tangible reminder that God's word

matters. As we increasingly access information and interact with others on-screen, it can be impactful to carry and flip through a physical Bible.

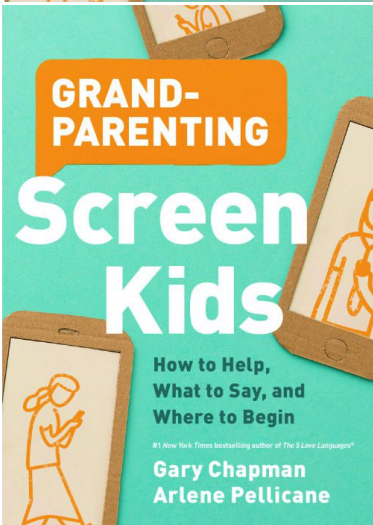
8. **Stay Calm** - There are many things wrong with the world. In the internet age, there always seems to be room for a new crisis. While the things of this world will ultimately fall apart, Christians belong to an unshakeable kingdom (Heb 12:28). We can wade into the challenges of this world with a sense of confidence and calm that God is with us. Being calm isn't the same as being callous. Instead, as we wade into the suffering and brokenness of the world, we do so without anxiety because we have the "peace of God that surpasses all understanding" (Phil 4:7). We can be calm because our fate is sealed with Christ not with the nations and institutions of the world.
9. **Consider Integrity** - What we say is a reflection of our hearts (Lk 6:45). We don't get a pass because we are on social media. Consider what it says about our faith when we become obsessed with the politics of the day rather than attending to the politics of the Kingdom. What does it tell others about the importance of Christ and the difference he makes for how we can live in the world when we are willing to do damage to those who oppose us by attacking their character or competence online. In Christ, we are to love our enemies (Matt 5:43-48), to be subject to the governing authorities that God appoints (Rom 13:1), and to offer a defense for the hope that is in us with "gentleness and respect, having a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame" (1 Pt 3:15-16). So, before championing a cause, consider your integrity and the testimony you are offering to our Lord and Savior.

## RESOURCES



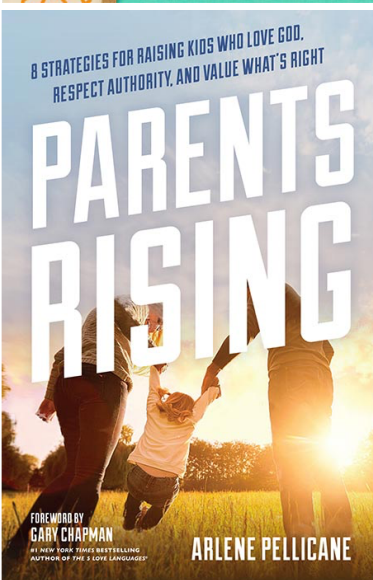
In *Screen Kids* Gary Chapman and Arlene Pellicane will empower you with the tools you need to make positive changes. Through stories, science, and wisdom, you'll discover how to take back your home from an over-dependence on screens. Plus, you'll learn to teach the five A+ skills that every child needs to master: affection, appreciation, anger management, apology, and attention. Learn how to:

- Protect and nurture your child's growing brain
- Establish simple boundaries that make a huge difference
- Recognize the warning signs of gaming too much
- Raise a child who won't gauge success through social media
- Teach your child to be safe online



*Grandparenting Screen Kids* is a grandparent's guide to start bridging this gap. Dr. Gary Chapman and Arlene Pellicane will help you understand this different (and often troubling) world of iPads, YouTube and video games. They will offer activities to keep your grandkids occupied without screens and assist you in navigating differences with your adult children.

It's easy to feel overwhelmed, under informed, and physically unable to meet the demands of active grandkids. That's why this companion guide to the book *Screen Kids* has been written to connect you to information and encouragement. Technology isn't going anywhere and your grandkids need you more than ever to guide them in ways that computer's can't.



What has happened to shift the power from parents to children? In *Parents Rising: 8 Strategies for Raising Kids Who Love God, Respect Authority, and Value What's Right*, you'll learn how to lead once again in your home, making both you and your children much happier. The 8 strategies outlined are:

- #1: Amusement is Not the Highest Priority
- #2: Parents Call the Shots
- #3: Routine and Boundaries Provide Security
- #4: The Bible and Prayer are Present Daily
- #5: Marriage Takes a Front Seat
- #6: Good Food Served on the Table
- #7: Love is Spelled T-I-M-E
- #8: Launching Adults, Not Babying Children



In *Calm, Cool, and Connected: 5 Digital Habits for a More Balanced Life*, I will walk you through an easy 5-step plan to help you center your life on God and loving others by decluttering your screen time. By introducing new habits with your phone and other screens, you can significantly improve the quality of your relationships, waste less time, and be more productive.

H - Hold Down the Off Button

A - Always Put People First

B - Brush Daily (live with a clean conscience)

I - I Will Go Online with Purpose

T - Take a Hike (get outside)

In *Growing Up Social*, you'll learn how to take back your home from an over-dependence on screens. Discover the five A + skills needed to give your child the relational edge:

The Skill of Affection - How do you show real love to another person?

The Skill of Appreciation - How do you cultivate a grateful heart?

The Skill of Attention - How do you focus and be a good listener?

The Skill of Anger Management - How do you express anger in a productive way?

The Skill of Apology - How do you mend a relationship after you make a mistake?

