

4. Every Knee Will Bow... to Something

Have you ever used Google maps? It's a helpful tool to get where you want to go, but have you ever used the satellite feature? It's so interesting to switch to this feature and get actual satellite pictures all over the earth. It's also interesting (and maybe a little scary) to get an overview of your own house. It can give you a different perspective on something you are pretty familiar with.

Like Google maps, if you zoom out above Scripture and look at the big story of the Bible, it helps you get a broader perspective on things. If you were to zoom out and look at an overview of the story of Scripture, you would see the broad themes of Creation, Fall, and Redemption.¹ Now, explaining each of these

1 Restoration is the fourth and final category in the overview of the Bible's storyline. This will be discussed later. I just didn't want you to think I forgot about it.

in great detail is well beyond the scope of this book. Rest assured, I will flesh these categories out along the way, but just keep them in mind.

Back in Chapter 1 (it seems like so long ago, right?), I referenced Genesis 1:26-28 and explained how foundational these verses are to all of life, specifically to this discussion of technology. From this point, I want to use these verses to help us understand why we do the things we do with our technology. In each chapter, I will consider the themes of Creation, Fall, and Redemption.

If you're confused, don't worry. Keep moving forward, and you'll see how these categories are used and what they have to do with technology.

CREATED TO WORSHIP

G. K. Chesterton once said, 'When man ceases to worship God he does not worship nothing but worships everything.'² What Chesterton was getting at was the biblical truth that we are all worshippers. All of humanity – believer and unbeliever – have been created to worship God.

2 As you will see, there's much debate over the source of this quote: <https://www.chesterton.org/ceases-to-worship/> (last accessed March 2019).

Before sin entered the world, Genesis 1:26-28 tells us, God created us in His image; therefore, it is in the DNA of humanity to give Him worship. Later, in Romans, we read that God's fingerprints are on creation for all to see and His existence is written on the heart of every human (Rom. 1:18ff). As many have said, the question is not, *Will you worship?* Rather it is, *What will you worship?*

Even though sin has now entered creation and poisoned our worship, it has not removed the desire to worship someone or something. For some it is food. For others it is friends. It is sports teams, money, fame, comfort, happiness, family, cars – whatever it is that you feel you cannot live without. For many of you holding this book, it's your smartphone.

WORSHIP VS. ADDICTION

Sin poisons our worship. Sin redirects our worship to everything else besides God. This truth led Dr. Edward T. Welch to say, 'Addictions are ultimately a disorder of worship.'³ Applying this logic to technology,

3 Welch, Edward T. *Addictions: A Banquet in the Grave – Finding Hope in the Power of the Gospel* (P&R Publishing: 2001), XVI.

people are worshipping their technology; they are addicted to their smartphones.

Now, I want to be cautious about throwing a word like 'addiction' around. There is definitely a spectrum with regard to addiction, and I think our minds gravitate towards substance abuse and hardcore drugs when we hear the word addiction. Still, it's an appropriate word to use when talking about technology.

In his book, *Irresistible: The Rise of Addictive Technology and the Business of Keeping Us Hooked*, Adam Alter explains that the word 'addiction' had been used long before we applied it to substance abuse. 'Addiction originally meant a different kind of strong connection,' says Alter, '[I]n Ancient Rome, being addicted meant you had just been sentenced to slavery. If you owed someone money and couldn't repay the debt, a judge would sentence you to addiction.'⁴

Behavioral addictions – like biting your fingernails or touching your phone screen – may be in a different category than addiction to heroin, for example, but they are addictions nonetheless and are *very* powerful... even destructive.

4 Alter, Adam. *Irresistible* (Penguin Press: 2017), 29.

In the CNN documentary *Being Thirteen: Inside the Secret World of Teens*, psychologists and psychiatrists affirmed that the language of addiction applied to teens' smartphone use is not too strong.

Steve Jobs – the creator of many of these devices – encouraged caution with their use. This was demonstrated by the fact that he wouldn't let his own children use iPads (their own father's creation). Chris Anderson, who edited the magazine *Wired*, would not allow his children to take phones into the bedroom, leading Alter to ask this question, 'Why are the world's greatest public technocrats also its greatest private technophobes?'⁵

I hope this shows you that this book, like pastors and parents, is not irrational in its concern about technology-related addictions. Not only are the creators of these devices communicating caution, many of them are creating devices to make you more addicted.

Senator Ben Sasse, who also sits on the Armed Services' Cybersecurity subcommittee, explains that some of the most brilliant minds are thinking about how to keep us more addicted to our tech. He cites the Pew Research

5 Ibid. 2.