



CHOOSING WHAT IS BETTER

Small Choices, Big Difference

Every day we make hundreds of small decisions about where to place our attention. Most of them feel small: a quick glance at a text, one more video, five minutes of scrolling while we wait, another show before bed.

But every "yes" to one thing is also a "no" to something else.

Imagine sitting in a waiting room. You spend the next fifteen minutes scrolling until your name is called. Nothing terrible happened. But nothing good happened either.

Now imagine that same fifteen minutes without your phone. You pray. You notice the people around you. Perhaps God brings peace to your heart, or you receive wisdom about a problem you've been stuck on. Maybe God opens the door to connect with someone next to you.

An ordinary moment becomes meaningful.

Or imagine an evening at home. The television is on. Phones are nearby. Conversation comes and goes. Nothing is wrong. But nothing goes very deep.

Now imagine the same evening without the distractions. Someone asks one more question. A burden is shared. A prayer is offered. A relationship grows.

What We Were Made For

God did not create us to consume endless information. He created us to know Him deeply and love people well. Yet it has become so easy to miss these moments.

Digital distraction does more than waste our time. It makes us miss Jesus, and it makes us miss the people right in front of us.

We tell ourselves it's just one quick look. But then the conversation changes. The prayer ends. The child walks away. The evening is gone.

Choosing What is Better

We can't love God fully while giving Him only part of our attention. We can't notice a lonely neighbor if our evenings are spent inside watching our favorite show. We cannot hear the quiet voice of the Holy Spirit if our minds are always full of noise.

Love requires our attention.

This week, let's choose to live more fully in the abundant life Jesus promised. Ask God to show you one moment to protect. Maybe it's your morning prayer. Maybe it's dinner with your family. Maybe it's an evening walk.

Guard that moment. Put away the distractions. Choose what is better.



CHOOSING WHAT IS BETTER

Practical Tips to Become More Present

1. Ask God what needs to change (Psalm 139:23-24)

The psalmist asked God to search his heart and show him anything that was wrong. Ask God to search your heart: "Where is technology keeping me from loving You or loving others?"

2. Know where your attention goes (Haggai 1:5-7)

Check the screen-time report on your phone. Which apps take up most of your time? When do you reach for your phone the most? Being honest is the first step to change.

3. Protect sacred moments (Ephesians 5:15-16)

Keep screens away during prayer, meals, conversations, and the first or last part of your day. Guard the moments that matter most.

4. Silence the noise (Proverbs 4:25-27)

Turn off notifications you don't truly need. Instead of checking your phone every time it buzzes, choose set times to read messages. Every interruption pulls your attention away from the person or work God has placed in front of you.

Even Jesus often went away to quiet places to pray. We do not need to be available to everyone all the time.

5. Choose presence over distraction (John 10:10)

When you feel like scrolling, choose something life-giving instead: pray, take a walk, read a few pages of a book, call a friend, or spend time with someone you love. Real change comes from filling your life with better things.

A black and white photograph of a person sitting and reading a book. The person is wearing a denim shirt and has a bracelet on their left wrist. The background is blurred, showing what appears to be a living room setting.

Reflect and Apply

SEPTEMBER

Choosing What is Better

1. Think about a normal day. When are you most likely to reach for your phone or turn on the television without even thinking about it? What are you usually looking for in that moment - relief, connection, escape, entertainment, or simply something to fill the time?

What might God be inviting you into instead?

2. Read Luke 10:38-42. Martha was busy serving. Mary sat and listened. Jesus said Mary had chosen "what was better."

What distractions most often keep you from choosing what is better? Why?

3. Technology is a gift from God that we are called to steward well. Read Philippians 4:8 and Psalm 101:3. These verses remind us to be thoughtful about what kind of media we consume, not just how much.

What would it look like to steward technology in a way that draws you closer to God and helps you serve others better?

4. As a leader, your attention shapes the people around you. What do you hope to model for others through the way you use technology?

5. Look back at the five practical tips. Which one is hardest for you? What is one small step you can take this week to become more present?



BONUS: DOES ONE GLANCE REALLY MATTER?

Small choices are easy to dismiss - until we see what they add up to. Here's what's actually happening when we reach for our phones.

1. **Your brain switches tasks—it doesn't multitask.**

When you check your phone while talking, reading, or working, your brain doesn't do both things at once. It quickly switches back and forth.

Every switch costs time, energy, and focus. The more often you switch, the harder it becomes to think deeply.

Why it matters: Deep work, deep prayer, and deep conversations all require focused attention. Too much task switching reduces our ability to go deep.

2. **A phone can distract you even when you don't use it.**

Researchers found that people think less clearly when their phone is sitting nearby, even if it is face down or turned off (Ward et al., 2017). Part of the brain keeps paying attention to the phone, just in case something happens.

Why it matters: Even when you're not checking it, part of your mind is still on your phone. Less of yourself is available for the things and people in front of you.

3. **One quick check is rarely one quick check.**

Most people pick up their phone to do one thing. Then they see another message. Another video. Another article. Another notification. Five minutes easily becomes thirty.

Why it matters: Over a lifetime, for many, these moments add up to months and years. Devices can cause us to miss out on so much of life if not used well.

4. **Relationships grow through small moments.**

Marriage researcher John Gottman found that healthy relationships are built through thousands of small moments of connection. A smile. A question. A story. A simple "Look at this."

When we regularly miss these moments, relationships slowly become weaker. But it's hard to notice these small moments of connection when we're distracted.

Why it matters: We are called to love others. Technology can cause us to miss the little moments where love happens.

5. **Technology is designed to keep your attention.**

Many apps use endless scrolling, autoplay, recommendations, and notifications to encourage you to stay longer.



BONUS: DOES ONE GLANCE REALLY MATTER?

This is not an accident. The longer you stay, the more money many companies earn.

Why it matters: Often we try to resist this pull with willpower alone. But the problem is not merely your weakness but the way devices and apps are designed. Seeing that clearly is the first step to change.

6. Your attention shapes your life.

Whatever receives your attention shapes your thoughts. Your thoughts shape your habits. Your habits shape the person you become.

Why it matters: We can't ignore this part of our lives and still become the people we want to be. We need to intentionally align this part of our lives with who God is calling us to be.

Selected sources: Ward et al. (2017), *Brain Drain*; Gloria Mark (2023), *Attention Span*; John Gottman & Nan Silver (1999), *The Seven Principles for Making Marriage Work*; Tristan Harris, *Center for Humane Technology*; Cal Newport (2016), *Deep Work*.