

DANGERS OF CELL PHONES

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In today's cultural almost universally we find cell phones. Many children and young teenagers can't even remember life without cell phones. Young managers and executives can't imagine how to run their departments or businesses without the existence of blackberries, PDAs and cell phones. I remember the first time I went to a movie theater and they had to advertise to please silence your cell phones. I was utterly amazed at the thought that you had to actually tell people to turn their phones off. Nowadays it reads please silence your cell phones and no texting. Even churches struggle with this modern convenience, as pastor's messages are disrespectfully interrupted by the various rock and roll ring tones. Churches have resulted to combat these interruptions by posting silence-your-cell-phones messages and/or announcements before worship services. The only real cure for this, is for God's people to act as they believe. They believe the Pastor's messages are messages that have been prepared by God in the heart of the Pastor. If this is true, then why do we treat it with such complacency? Why do we not act out of our own beliefs to prepare ourselves to receive this message, and ensure we are not the ones being disrespectful. In actuality, if you are there to worship God, do you really need to be reached by some non-believer who may try to reach you during church services? We need to learn to leave those silly things off, in the car or at home. Just come to church prepared to worship God without any distractions for yourself and others.

Amongst this modern convenience, we have seen the rise of text messaging and picture messaging. Parents to children and children to children can conveniently send short messages to each other without having to make those phone calls which includes the greetings and good-bye rituals. This modern invention which has become so handy has some real fundamental problems that come with it. The most obvious problem is the mental distraction by wandering minds, as they carry on conversations during school and churches. In all practicality, this will always be a problem for teenagers. There is no cure for an uninterested teenager, they will always find something to use in order to pass their boredom. Teachers will always have this battle whether it is cell phones or passing notes.

The first fundamental problem with texting is the language of texting. We are raising a generation of young adults who don't know how to spell and/or form a complete sentence. As the popularity of texting rises we find a fundamental decline in teenagers ability to write. In some regions it has become so bad that people are starting to speak the way they texts. "My BFF, Jill" "My peps." etc...If we were to follow the evolution/de-evolution of writing, it would look something like this: Pictures representing words. Pictures to represent syllables of words. Pictures evolved into letters to form individual sounds. Letters developed into art of writing. Schools taught cursive writing. Cursive was removed from schools, only print writing taught. Now typing with use of spell checker. Now texting, which represents syllables of words. All we need now is to learn how to select those smiley faces in the right order, and we can return to pictures representing words, thus skipping writing altogether. As parents and adults in the workplace we should be concerned. This generation of young adults will be entering into the workplace. There is a real need to be able to express yourself in proper English and grammar. These young adults will have to write resumes, work emails, memorandums, etc. How will they

rise in the work place if they don't understand the necessity for writing. We need to continue to encourage them in their abilities to spell. There is no fix for mis-spelling words by using the wrong word, because you can't tell which one is which. We need to remind them how important it is to be able to write, using the proper grammar, proper capitalization and punctuation. Certainly the teachers in our schools are doing their best to enforce these practices, but most teenagers see no application of schooling in the real world. That is the role of the parents; to make education applications and show the need for them.

The second fundamental problem with texting, or more specifically, is picture messaging. God's people are so busy striving to walk righteously that they sometimes fail to realize how perverted un-godly men's thoughts can be. Almost all cell phones come with cameras. With a few clicks of a button you can snap a picture and send to a dozen friends in a few seconds. With the popularity of cell phones in schools, there has been a rise in inappropriate and indecent pictures on those same cell phones. There was a recent news article in the USA Today, of a teenage boy who snapped a picture of his girl friend while her shirt was off. Unknown to her the picture was taken, and he sent it to all his friends at school. When she found out, she was extremely humiliated and the parents were outraged by the actions of the boy. Unfortunately, the boy was 18 years of age and the girl was not. They filed a law suit, and won, against him for taking pornographic pictures of a minor. What was a prank by a school boy, became a lawsuit in which he was convicted as a sexual offender for the rest of his life. As parents, we can all feel the outrage of the parents of both the girl and the boy. We would not want our daughters (or sons) to have indecent or even nudity pictures passed around at school. We would not want our sons (or daughters) to be involved in sexual pranks with legal consequences that affect them the rest of their life for a childish mistake. We must remember to check our children's phones and computers for sexual content. They must learn that it is wrong to be involved in it and have that kind of material. There is a proper place for sexuality, as a gift from God, but it is not on your cell phone. They must be warned of the mischievousness and cruelty of un-godly friends at school. Humiliating pictures can be taken in many situations, not just of a sexual nature. This requires proactively on the part of parents to be involved in the lives your children and educating them of potential dangers.