



07.07.24

# Group Guide

## Disconnection



## Introduction

More than ever before, the world is at our fingertips. The content available to us through our devices is practically limitless — all we have to do is scroll. Our attention is currency, and where we spend our attention matters because it shapes us. In week three, Pastor Jesse was joined by Cody Caraway, our Executive Pastor of Digital & Reach Ministries, and Simon Campbell, our Marketing & Communications Director, talked about how screens can keep us disconnected and what we can do about it.

## Discussion

1. Many studies show a direct correlation between increased time on social media and increased anxiety, higher rates of depression, and shorter attention spans (just to name a few results.) Have you ever experienced similar outcomes as a result of using social media? Generally, what kind of impact does scrolling tend to have on your health?
2. Pastor Cody shared how these “side effects” of social media can cause a cycle in us. As we experience these negative results, we seek social connectedness or validation that drives us right back to social media again. Have you ever experienced a cycle similar to this in your engagement with social media? Or seen it in someone you know? What was (or is) that experience like?
3. That said, screens aren’t inherently bad; how we choose to use them can have an impact positively or negatively. Have you ever thought about the habits you’re forming by the use of your screens? What percentage of your usage would you say is useful or healthy vs. unhealthy? Do you have any boundaries set for yourself? If so, how did you land on them? If not, what might you need based on your current habits?
4. **Revisit and read Matthew 22:36-40 and 22:18-20.** When our attention is grabbed by something other than Jesus, other things become more important than what he says is important. And often in the world of screens, it can result in us giving ourselves permission not to love someone else (both our neighbors and our enemies.) Have you felt this kind of permission yourself at times? How have you seen this play out on social media around you?

**5. Revisit and read 2 Timothy 4:3-5.** In Paul's time, he was speaking about competing teachers in the churches that were disconnecting people from the gospel. In a very similar way today, we are accumulating "teachers" through our screens that are influencing us every day. Who is currently teaching you based on what you're seeing or interacting with most? If it isn't Jesus, how might you use both digital and non-digital tools to help make a change?

## Application

- **Get real.** How much screen time (particularly on social media) is a part of your day? What voices (whether people or types of content) are you viewing and listening to most? Do you know how it's impacting you? Open your phone and take a look at your Screentime (Apple) or Digital Wellbeing (Android) apps to see how you're spending your time and pay attention to the type of content you're consuming. It may surprise you!
- **Identify what's good and bad.** Remember, screen time can be positive or negative based on how you use it. Keep track of your behavior and habits and evaluate whether it's useful/healthy or useless/unhealthy. Then come back and evaluate again.
- **Set some boundaries.** Where you find unhealthy behavior and habits, set some boundaries or friction to help deter or minimize that usage. Remember, these are designed to help based on what you know you need based on your behavior vs. just being rules to bum you out. You picked them for a reason!