

Deeply Rooted in the Discipline of Unplugging

The Day My Phone Died

On December 22, riding in the car, my phone kept shutting off. Even when plugged in, it didn't have enough power to stay on. My husband dropped me off at the front of Costco, while he went to find a parking space. I went to do my shopping without a phone! I had to try to remember what I needed to buy since my shopping list was on my phone. I saw something that I thought my husband would like. I went to snap a picture but couldn't—no phone. My husband, after he parked, instead of calling me to find me, had to look through the aisles of the entire store (thankfully, we have a pretty consistent pattern of how we shop at Costco so it wasn't too hard to locate me).

After putting the groceries away at home, we went to the Phone store, and waited. Apparently everyone had a need for a new phone 3 days before Christmas. I stared at the walls; I couldn't scroll on my phone. Soon we used my husband's phone to purchase me a new phone on Amazon. Yes, I could get a new phone, but I wouldn't be delivered until December 28! Admittedly, I freaked out! How would I survive? We were scheduled to go on a trip shortly after Christmas. All the information for the flight was in my app, on my phone. What am I going to do for 2 hours on the plane? Thankfully, through Amazon Business we were able to order a phone, and it was delivered that evening.

In all, I went about 9 hours without a phone in my hand. Throughout the day, I went to grab my phone to see the time (even though I wear a Fitbit on my wrist), to check Facebook, to play a mindless game, even to record the number of ounces of water I drank throughout the day. I really noticed its absence when I sat on the couch to "watch" a Christmas movie. I had nothing to do but to actually watch the movie!

Did I die from 9 hours without a phone? No! Did I miss out on anything truly important in those phoneless hours? Not really. But it did reveal that I am addicted to my phone, and I turned to it to fill the time and to provide comfort. I longed to have a phone back in my hands.

As I went to bed that night, with my new phone plugged in on my nightstand, I thought about the longing, desire and need for the phone. Do I have the same longing, desire and need for connection with God? Do I freak out if I don't have time in prayer or in His Word each day? Sadly, the answer is no. How often have I missed my daily time with God and it went unnoticed? How much time could I be spending with God in prayer and reading His Word, if I weren't scrolling on my phone?

Psalm 119:20 says, *My soul is consumed with longing for your laws at all times.*

The whole ordeal has really challenged me. I want to long for God's Word like I longed for the phone. Unplugging for periods of time and connecting to the Lord in His Word is definitely a better use of my time. Lord, give me the desire and longing for your Word more than my phone!



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Conversation Starters

Gather some friends, unplug from devices, and spend some time sharing in conversation.

- ◆ How long can you go without checking your emails or texts?
- ◆ How do you respond when you hear or see the alerts on your phone? Can you ignore them?
- ◆ How does the idea of unplugging make you feel?
- ◆ What do you think you would miss if you went without technology for a day?
- ◆ If you didn't fill your time on your phone, what would you fill it with?
- ◆ If social media didn't exist, how would your life be different?
- ◆ How does your phone impact your relationships with others?
- ◆ Think back to life before you had a phone with you 24/7 (you weren't born with one in your hands). How did you fill your time? What did you do?
- ◆ Are you willing to try to unplug? What steps are you going to take?

“Disconnecting from the technology that has lured us into thinking that we cannot live without it will enable us to pause and regain a healthy perspective for real-life experiences and for God.” Frank M. Hasel

Additional Resources

Check out our website for more resources to help you be rooted in the discipline of Unplugging: <https://usw-womensministries.org/>

Bible Study: *Unplugging* by Lt. Makda Rodriguera

Blog: *Flourishing in the Discipline of Unplugging* by Colonel Genevera Vincent

Devotional: *Let's Unplug* by Captain Amelia Mott

Craft Idea: *Napkin Mod Podge Planter* by Captain Hilda Parks

A Prayer for Unplugging

Make it your goal this month to spend 5-10 minutes each day (this is the shortest month of the year) minus any technology (don't even have your phone, tablet, or laptop in the same room as you) and simply speak to the Lord. Here is a prayer you could pray:

O God, we thank you for the gift of connectivity, through which you strengthen relationships and communities, allowing shared pursuits to proceed.

We thank you for the gift of meaningful work and gainful employment, even as we pray for those unjustly excluded from the benefits of these blessings.

We thank you for the gift of technology, those tools and spaces that help us work and play in ways that were once unimaginable to us.

We know these gifts are good, dear Lord, and we confess that we do not always use them wisely. We know as well that there are times when you call us to set them aside, to step away.

Help us remember that unplugging from our daily cares makes space for us to connect more deeply with you, with our dearest ones, and with ourselves.

Help us in this time to drink deeply from the well of your love. Help us to rest, and to know your peace.

You have given us much to do, O Creator of Life and Sustainer of the World. Help us remember that you do not need us to do it all.

Be with us all our lives as we learn the sacred art of letting go. Amen.

By Kyle Oliver (<https://creativecommonsprayer.com>)



This month read about how people in the Bible connected with God when they were alone with Him.

Flourishing in the Word

Obviously people didn't need to unplug from technology during Bible times, but we do read of people separating themselves, and being alone with God. Read about some of their encounters with God this month.

Feb 1	Genesis 28:10-22	Feb 16	Ezekiel 2:1-3:15
Feb 2	Genesis 32:22-32	Feb 17	Matthew 4:1-11
Feb 3	Exodus 3:1-22	Feb 18	Matthew 14:13-33
Feb 4	Exodus 4:1-17	Feb 19	Mark 1:12-13
Feb 5	Exodus 19:1-25	Feb 20	Mark 1:35-39
Feb 6	Exodus 33:7-11	Feb 21	Mark 6:30-34
Feb 7	Exodus 34:1-9, 29-35	Feb 22	Luke 4:1-13
Feb 8	Psalms 90:1-17	Feb 23	Luke 5:12-16
Feb 9	1 Samuel 3:1-21	Feb 24	Luke 6:12-13
Feb 10	1 Kings 3:1-15	Feb 25	Luke 11:1-13
Feb 11	Psalms 72:1-20	Feb 26	Acts 9:1-19
Feb 12	1 Kings 17:1-7	Feb 27	Galatians 1:11-17
Feb 13	1 Kings 19:1-18	Feb 28	Acts 10:9-33
Feb 14	Isaiah 6:1-13	Feb 29	Revelation 1:1-20
Feb 15	Ezekiel 1:1-28		

Flourishing Ideas from the Territory

Albuquerque Citadel, NM met their goal of raising \$1,000 to create a prayer room at the Adult Rehabilitation Program.

Anchorage Korean, AK ladies served the snacks and lunches for the summer Day Camp.

Chuuk, Micronesia did a study on The Salvation Army's doctrine.

El Centro, CA ladies brought different salsas for a salsa tasting contest.

Gateway, AK started a Mommy and Me group, "*Music, Movement and More.*"

Grand Junction, CO created a prayer request bulletin board for their chapel with the use of acrylic paints.

Grants Pass, OR made pinecone porcupines and pinecone Christmas trees to hand out as gifts for the nursing homes.

Helena, MT had Jacqui Larsson from THQ do a virtual Home League program on Human Trafficking.

Rancho Cordova, CA made 100 dish scrubs to be given out to others.

Tulare, CA had a "Taking Care of Finances" class and learned ways to save money in their daily purchasing.

Unplugging Throughout the Day

According to a recent survey 84% of cell phone users claim they could not go a single day without their devices. (I know I am one!) Another study showed that mobile device owners check their devices every 6.5 minutes! I know that the idea of going cold turkey without your phone is challenging and might even cause a bit of anxiety. Here are four rules in order to incorporate short “unplugged” times throughout your day (I promise—you won’t die).

1. **Meals Minus Phones.** No phones at meals. Sit and savor the food you are eating. Enjoy conversation with those who are at the table with you.
2. **Phoneless Walk Breaks.** Take a 15-minute walk mid-morning, lunchtime, and mid-afternoon with no phone in hand. Move your body, breathe deeply. Listen to the sounds around you. Spend time quieting your mind. Spend time communing with the Father rather than being connected to the phone.
3. **Phoneless Pit Stops.** No phones in the restroom.—EVER! Enough said.
4. **Phone off while driving to and from work.** Yes, turned off! That means no scrolling at stop lights, no phone calls or texts to distract you. It is a safety issues, but it gives time to clear your mind, focus on driving, breathe, and center yourself for what is ahead.



“Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed.” Mark 1:35



How Do We Practice Unplugging?

Author Sharla Fritz shares some practical tips to practice unplugging. (<https://www.sharlafriz.com/2018/02/practicing-lent-unplugging/>)

Each week choose one day to unplug. Consider making unplugging part of your Sabbath.

Each day choose an hour or two to unplug. Turn off your cell phone. Spend time reading the Word and in prayer, go for a walk and enjoy nature, spend time in focused conversation with someone.

Choose a period of time to fast from social media. The season of Lent (which begins February 14 this year) is a good time to give up social media. Use the time you would have spent on social media reading a book, listening to Christian music, enjoying nature, or meeting with friends in real life.

Limit your technology use. Choose an amount of time to be online and stick to it. It’s easy to get caught up in all the Internet rabbit trails. Set a timer and stick to your time commitment.