



Stay Connected...We Care!

VOL. 1409

DIGITAL INVASION

While visiting Hong Kong 2 months ago, I had to commute by MTR around 8 a.m. for an appointment with the Solicitor to tidy up my late father's assets in Hong Kong. Getting on the MTR at peak hour was a nightmare. I was literally pushed and squashed into the already packed carriage. Before I could get hold of my balance, the train jerked to a start and my foot landed heavily on the foot of the guy standing next to me. Looking up in embarrassment and guilt I uttered my apology, but heard no response, as he had his eyes fixated on his android phone and was totally oblivious to the circumstances. Taking a moment to survey the people surrounding me, I realized that likewise, all of them were concentrating on their phones, some with ear plugs, and a couple was having conversations over the phone.....all happening in this congested space.

On my return trip, the MTR train was not packed, in fact it was roomy and I managed to get a seat. My attention was drawn to a woman 2 seats away, shouting over the phone "Quickly finish your homework, I will be home straightaway!" Having ended her conversation with annoyance, she immediately clicked on the Facebook App and posted photos on her page. The Teenager sitting on my left was watching a World Cup soccer game with excitement. The young lady on my right wearing an ear plug had her eyes glued on the screen of her phone and was watching the latest Korean romantic drama in deep sober. I then cast my eyes to the people seated on the opposite bench. Out of the 7, only 2 elderly women were chatting and the rest had their eyes anchored on their phones with a few playing App games. At that instance, I felt this pressure and urge to join them, to show that I am not an outsider to this digital technology. But I quickly held back, concealing my iPhone in my pocket in defiance and pride that I have self control, and will not be obsessed by this digital devise.

That night at a restaurant where friends invited me, I observed a family of 3 at the table next to us each with an individual tablet focusing on them with great intent. A few occasions I noticed the father reluctantly looked up from his tablet and shouted impatiently to the son seated opposite, "What! You still don't understand??! Just use your brain! You can do it!" The son, speechless, wearing a helpless distressed look bent his head and returned to his tablet. Scanning round other tables, I observed the same phenomenon... people were either reading, texting, playing or talking over their mobile phones.



I couldn't lay to sleep that night with thoughts churning inside me: the development and continuous creation of Digital products no doubt have brought us economical benefits and have projected much convenience to our living. But the concerns that at this day and age in a global scale, human lives at work or otherwise, have evolved to be endlessly intertwined with digital technology, and more often than not, are ensnared by it. Inevitably I felt anxious and concerned ... this is the age of DIGITAL INVASION! Human lives succumb to its conquest, what will be the consequences? The effects it manifests can steal our time from personal interactions to intimacy with God. Psalm 46:10 called upon us to "be still" and know that He is God. Where do we find this "stillness" in our daily life when we yield ourselves to the endless Apps on our phones? One may argue that the Devotional App, Bible App, Bible Gateway App etc , connect us with God. But Satan always has a way to distract us or tempt us to click on the other 20 (or more) Apps, messages and emails stored in our phones.

Maybe, the next time when you are about to open an App, ask yourself these first:

- "Where has my time gone?" How much time have I given to God today, time in drawing close to Him? How much time have I spent with my spouse, my children....a face to face deep open conversation with them or listening attentively to their inner thoughts and aspirations ? How much time have I spent busy over swiping Apps, sending and receiving text messages, chatting on "whatsApp", "WeChat", posting on "Facebook", viewing on "YouTube"?
- Have Social media, Internet, mobile Apps become "The Third Party" between my spouse, and my family? Do I have this unconscious habit of swiping and texting on the phone while having a conversation with my family members? Do you realize that your small gesture is conveying a message to them that: "You are not important to me "And also they would feel not being respected and cared for. Is this your true intention?
- "Is my communication effective?" Based on research findings on Effective Communication, 7% is attributed from your expression in speech, 38% stems from the emotions articulated in your voice, and 55% is the non-verbal facial expressions, gestures, and body movements etc that assert the message. Is my communication with my spouse and children face to face? Or, even at home do I need to communicate with them through SMS, WhatsApp, WeChat, and email?
- Have I thought of ways to establish self control and digital boundaries to halt against becoming addicted to digital it? Am I setting a good example to my children?

Apostle Paul beseeched us that "Everything is permissible for me – but not everything is beneficial." (1Cor 6:12) Hope that we have learned to "manage" the never ending digital products, and NOT let the digital products "control" us!

"Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, making the best use of the time, because the days are evil." Eph5:15-16 (ESV)

~ by Brooke