John Stonestreet *&* Brett Kunkle

A Practical Guide *to* Culture

Helping *the* Next Generation
Navigate Today's World

What people are saying about …

A Practical Guide *to* Culture

"Everyone who works with students and cares about their future needs this guide. It's exactly what the title says: practical. John and Brett have filled this book with clarity, wisdom, and loving advice on the most important issues facing this generation."

Eric Metaxas, author of *Bonhoeffer* and nationally syndicated radio host

"Culture is dynamic and changing—and that change often comes in waves that threaten to overwhelm us. But as Christians, we're able to secure ourselves to solid, unchanging truth in the chaotic ocean of culture. John Stonestreet and Brett Kunkle show us how to navigate the tides and pass those skills on to the next generation."

Jim Daly, president of Focus on the Family

"*A Practical Guide to Culture* is a profound, witty, and forthright manual written by two concerned dads who also happen to be two of the most effective worldview and apologetics experts of our day. Based on their deep experience working with tens of thousands of teenagers, John and Brett show how to stop giving in to a

degrading culture that makes kids unhealthy and sad and how to start raising kids who love Jesus and live without fear and regret."

Jeff Myers, PhD, president of Summit Ministries

"I wish John Stonestreet and Brett Kunkle had written *A Practical Guide to Culture* years ago. As a parent and youth pastor, I was often concerned about the impact the culture might have on my children and students, and I wasn't always sure how to address the challenges. John and Brett have written a hopeful, engaging book that will prepare parents, educators, and youth leaders to equip young minds. This isn't just a survey of culture; it's an active, purposeful, and thoughtful action plan. If you want your students and children to represent Christ in a fallen world as they thrive in their Christian walk, *A Practical Guide to Culture* is an essential guide."

J. Warner Wallace, cold-case detective, adjunct professor of apologetics at Biola University, and author of *Cold-Case Christianity, God's Crime Scene*, and *Forensic Faith*

"Will the next generation be defined by the radical cultural shifts taking place, or will the culture be defined by a generation committed to the radical love, redemptive truth, and restorative grace of Jesus? In *A Practical Guide to Culture*, John Stonestreet and Brett Kunkle provide a biblically based roadmap designed to assist a generation's navigation through the difficult currents of relativism, decadence, and apathy, while simultaneously shining the light of Christ."

Rev. Samuel Rodriguez, president of the National Hispanic Christian Leadership Conference

"A wise and accessible guide for Christian parents in these rapidly changing times. Stonestreet and Kunkle do more than scratch the surface; they take us deeper into the underlying worldview issues that give rise to so many conflicts in our culture."

Trevin Wax, Bible and reference publisher for LifeWay Christian Resources and author of several books, including *This Is Our Time*

"*A Practical Guide to Culture* is smart, clear, and incredibly helpful for Christians trying to raise faithful, resilient children in a post-Christian—and increasingly anti-Christian—society. This is a book written by intelligent men who know how to relate big ideas to daily life in terms everyone can understand. When people ask me, 'But what can we Christians do about the collapsing culture?', I will emphatically recommend this book as the place to begin. I'm buying two copies: one for my family's use and one for my pastor's."

Rod Dreher, author of *The Benedict Option*

"*A Practical Guide to Culture* lives up to its name. John and Brett have written an insightful, timely, and easy-to-use book that will help youth influencers guide students through some of the most murky issues of our day. They tackle issues like consumerism, pornography, gender identity, racial tension, and more. And they do it with both clarity and conviction. If you are a parent, teacher, or youth worker, this book is an indispensable guide."

Sean McDowell, PhD, author, speaker, and professor

"Using illustrations, data, and ideas, John and Brett masterfully explain why we're facing the contemporary cultural challenges we are. They uncover what God wants us to understand about them and what we can do. Their explanation of the Bible and the way they consistently frame issues with the Bible story is a refreshing perspective I haven't seen or heard. It's compelling and extremely valuable. You and your children can move from anger to love, despair to hope, apathy to involvement, fear to confidence, ignorance to wisdom, and isolation to collaboration. You'll be empowered and full of hope."

Kathy Koch, PhD, founder and
president of Celebrate Kids, Inc.

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David ⓒ Cook®

transforming lives together

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To Erin and Sarah, the loves of our lives and
the mothers of our children, who make us better
men, better fathers, and better at what we do.

We outkicked our punt coverage
when we found you.

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Part Four: Christian Worldview Essentials

Introduction

My name is Brett, and I surf. As a surfing dad, I've dreamed of the day when my kids will paddle out to the lineup and catch waves on their own, with me cheering them on. But the ocean can be a punishing place. Pounding waves can give them such a beating, they may never want to go back in the ocean. So there are steps I must take now to protect and prepare my kids for the waves I hope one day they'll ride on their own.

As Christian dads, John and I both dream of the day our kids will wade out into the culture and impact the world for Christ. But like ocean waves, the culture can be a punishing place too. How many kids do you know who have been raised in the church only to be lost to the world after (and sometimes before) they leave home? How many Christian students, who seem to be grounded in the faith, end up making poor decisions that harm themselves and others?

Some Christian parents, oblivious to any danger, send their kids into the culture headfirst. Others think total protection is the answer, prohibiting their kids from ever dipping a toe in the cultural waters until they're out on their own. Most of us vacillate between these extremes, depending on the issue and maybe the

child. Neither extreme, however, will bring about the vision of a courageous, new generation of Christ followers, able and willing to not only navigate the cultural waters without drowning but also emerge as leaders in the days ahead.

It's always been rough out there, but the palpable sense of many American Christians—especially parents—is that the cultural currents have shifted and intensified. The past few years have brought a tsunami of change, and not for the better. One issue after another after another hits us like a series of waves at high tide. We wonder if and how our kids can keep their heads above water, much less live the sort of flourishing Christian lives we hope they will. As dads, we wonder how we can too.

John and I have invested much of our lives working with the emerging generation of kids, as well as their parents, teachers, mentors, and church leaders. John has spent the past decade and a half observing culture, following stories and tracking trends, helping Christians understand the world around them, and calling them to engage it. I've spent my entire career in youth ministry, first as a youth pastor and then as the director of student impact for Stand to Reason (www.str.org), an apologetics ministry committed to equipping Christians to be ambassadors of Christ.

We, too, sense that times have changed. In our lifetimes, we have never seen the pressure on Christian conviction greater than it is right now. We try to avoid alarmism, but standing for Christ in our culture is getting harder and harder.

The kids we care about most, however, are our own. Forgive us for being selfish, but between our families, we have nine little image

bearers we love more than anything (including a little Stonestreet who will leave the oven sometime before this book is published). Though both of us married out of our leagues, we know even that distinct advantage doesn't guarantee our kids won't struggle. There are no perfect parents, and there are no perfect kids. Still, we'll do everything we can to teach our kids to trust God, read the cultural waters, and ride above the waves without drowning.

We know you care about the next generation of kids too. We wrote this book for all who have a vested interest in their success like we do. The kids of today will build the culture of tomorrow. We've aimed this book at parents, grandparents, mentors, teachers, and pastors who have some little image bearers in their lives, as we have in ours, and who want to see them navigate this cultural moment as champions for Christ.

By now you've likely noticed a metaphor. We chose the imagery of the ocean partly because I am, at heart, a surf bum, but mostly because it's a terrific analogy for culture. Like the ocean, culture is all around us. Just as fish swim in the ocean, culture is the water in which we swim. (We'll present more on this in the next chapter.) Also, like the ocean, culture has both seen and unseen elements. Though cultural undercurrents are invisible, they powerfully pressure us to conform to their collective assumptions about the world. Cultural issues, however, are more like waves: seen, heard, and felt. Understanding both is critically important if we're to keep our heads above water.

Part 1 provides a framework of culture for Christians. In the first chapter, we define culture, both what it is and what it is not.

Culture is a lot of things, but it's not everything. In the second chapter, we put culture in the context of the gospel because, well, that's where it belongs. Too many Christians try to put the gospel in the context of culture, but we think that's getting things exactly backward. In the third chapter, we suggest what success will look like in this cultural moment. What is it we hope our kids will become in this culture? How will we know if they're okay? We hope this chapter helps parents like us who may struggle with the idol of safety.

Once the framework is in place, we'll turn our attention to our current cultural moment. Every culture is made up of both obvious issues and less-than-obvious trends or norms. It's vital to understand both.

Part 2 focuses on those powerful yet subtle undercurrents of our culture that often go unnoticed. For example, chapter 4 examines the significant ramifications of living in the information age, where there's a lot of noise but little truth. Chapter 5 examines the crucial issue of identity or what it means to be human, which is, as many have noted, in crisis in the West today. Kids are given very few societal resources for coming to grips with who they are, but the church has the best story of humanity on the market. Chapter 6 examines how we can help kids navigate a technoculture that threatens their relational capacities. While chapter 5 talks about what it means to be human, this chapter will talk about how to be human together. In chapter 7, we'll discuss the loss of virtue in an age of extended adolescence. If Christian kids can just *grow up*, they'll be way ahead of many of their peers.

Each chapter in part 3 focuses on a singular cultural issue (or "wave"). The first four chapters deal with what our friend Jay Richards has called "the pelvic issues": pornography, casual sex, sexual orientation, and gender identity. Each of these issues has to do with how our culture currently misunderstands sex and sexuality. The remaining chapters deal with the issues of affluence and consumerism, addiction, entertainment, and racial tension. In each chapter, we identify the cultural lies, compare those lies with biblical truth, and offer both practical action points and a vision of hope for overcoming the challenges these issues present.

Parents or mentors facing a particular issue may just want to jump to the appropriate chapter in part 3. That's fine, of course, but don't miss the big-picture teachings in parts 1 and 2. Too many Christians have a tendency to *react* to what is loudest and noisiest in our culture, which often means *overreacting* to what isn't ultimately important and *underreacting* to what is.

Finally, part 4 contains four shorter chapters on topics that, through the writing of this book, repeatedly popped up as essential "tool kit" items. We call these "Christian worldview essentials" for parents and kids. There are other essentials of a Christian worldview, of course, but these are the ones that seem particularly important for the task this book seeks to tackle: empowering parents and mentors to help kids navigate this cultural moment.

Throughout the book, we rely heavily on the insights of others. As students of culture ourselves, John and I want you to be aware of men and women who see the world more clearly than we do. So be sure to check out the endnotes and the books, articles, videos,

and other helpful tools we recommend in each chapter. We rely on these resources, but, we should add, they shouldn't be blamed for any mistakes, oversights, or misrepresentations on our part. We'll take the blame for those while hoping and praying this book serves and helps those who are concerned with serving and helping the next generation.

Chapter Six

Being Alone Together

*The huge modern heresy is to alter the human soul
to fit modern social conditions, instead of altering
modern social conditions to fit the human soul.*

G. K. Chesterton

"Oh yeah," students tell Brett and me, "that happens all the time."

They're referring to a phenomenon we find, well, creepy. Apparently, some people, while physically separated from their phones, can sense when they receive a text message. For students, this is quite normal. In other words, they're in class, and their phones are in their lockers, and yet in some sort of strange violation of the space-time continuum, they know they have a text. They just *know*.

I (John) first heard of this phenomenon from Sherry Turkle, psychologist and professor of social studies and technology at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). Turkle was a guest on my weekly radio program, and we were talking about her book *Alone Together: Why We Expect More from Technology and Less from*

Each Other.[1] Most of us have experienced "phantom ringing," a mental false alarm of receiving a call or a text message, but this is different. This is like a technological ESP. The phrase "That kid is attached to his phone" is no longer hyperbole.

For nearly thirty years, Turkle has studied the impact of computer and online technology on people and their relationships. "Not that long ago," she says, "we were trying to figure out how we would keep our computers busy.… [Now,] they keep us busy. It's kind of as though we are their killer app."[2] Along the way, Turkle's perspective on life in the digital age has evolved with the technology she studies.

Her first book, *The Second Self: Computers and the Human Spirit*, was written in 1984, well before the invention of the World Wide Web.[3] Back then, computers were basically enormous calculators, used for spreadsheets, programming code, and primitive games. Yet Turkle saw that computers were becoming more than machines to use. They would become, she predicted, extensions of ourselves. She was correct.

In 1997, Turkle published *Life on the Screen: Identity in the Age of the Internet*.[4] Though many of us were online by then, websites were informational but not interactive. People got together in chat rooms, but social-media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and Snapchat were still a decade away. Smartphones weren't very smart (no one had heard of an iPhone), emails were sent with annoying swishing sounds, and people spent most of the day off line.

As in her earlier book, Turkle was prophetic. When people went online, she realized, they were doing more than expressing

themselves. They were exploring *alternative selves*. Turkle predicted that online life, unlike real life, would make possible new ways of thinking about identity: decentered, virtual, and not bound by gender, age, or physical, ethnic, and geographic limitations. Online, people could be whoever they wanted to be.

What Turkle's first two books had in common, other than eerily accurate predictions, was optimism. When I first read *Life on the Screen* in seminary, I found her celebration of dissatisfied fifty-seven-year-old men becoming virtual eighteen-year-old girls more than a little strange. We were watching the intersection of human evolution and postmodern identity, she believed, and back then she didn't see a downside. Today she does.

When I asked Turkle why the tone of *Alone Together* was so different from that of her earlier books, she replied, "I wasn't pre-scient." Then she added, "And I do have a teenage daughter." In the fifteen years between her second and third books, her optimism about online life turned into deep concern about the state of human relationships. "We're designing technologies that will give us the illusion of companionship," Turkle says, "without the demands of friendship."[5] With everyone controlling their own little technogadget worlds, no one is vulnerable. Eye contact is rare. Increasingly, as the title suggests, we are learning to be alone together.

How Our Technology Shapes Us

"We do not ride on the railroad; it rides upon us."[6] Historically, each new technology had naysayers who predicted that terrible

things would happen to humanity if they didn't resist it. Most of the time, technofears were overblown. However, we share Turkle's concern about how much life is being lived online these days, and how it's affecting all of us, and especially our kids.

Most of us are unaware of and tend to dramatically underestimate how much time we spend with phones, tablets, televisions, or computer monitors.[7] Yet the average time for Americans in front of our glowing screens continues to skyrocket. From 2004 and 2009, according to a Brookings Institution report, the combined average time *each day* spent watching television, browsing the web, and playing video games for children and teens increased by ninety minutes.[8] Remember, technologically speaking, 2009 was a lifetime ago. More recently, CNN reported that Americans now spend *ten hours a day* with screens of some kind.[9]

One way our current technological challenges differ from those of the past is in technology's omnipresence. There is virtually no place in our lives where a screen isn't front and center. Think about it: at work, at school, in the car, on planes, in our pockets, on the nightstand, at the dinner table, on vacation, in church during the sermon, in line at the store, at playgrounds distracting us from our kids, in museums overshadowing the artifacts, at national landmarks surrounded by beautiful things—the list goes on and on. It's no exaggeration to say that life today is lived more indirectly than directly, with our experiences, conversations, and relationships mediated to us through our various devices.

There are consequences when life is lived this way.[10] First, we lose touch with our world. Especially through social media

like Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram, we adopt an odd posture toward everyday life. Rather than enjoying the moment we're in, making the most of an experience, and contemplating important lessons learned and memories made, we find ourselves thinking, *How many likes and shares will my picture of this get?*

Recently, on a trip to Alaska, my (John's) family took a whale-watching excursion. It must have been our lucky day, because a whole pod of humpbacks came within fifty yards or so of the front of the boat. You can guess what everyone on the boat did next (including us). Instead of actually absorbing this incredible moment of seeing one of God's most majestic creatures with our bare eyes, we focused all of our efforts on trying to capture video footage with our phones. How many times have we missed fireworks shows, sunsets, sporting events, or even our children's milestones because instead of actually being there, living in the world God created, we were focused on capturing life for social media?

A second consequence of living life through our devices is that we lose touch with one another. Employers have told Brett and me that many in the emerging generation struggle to make eye contact and can't understand nonverbal communication. We've all been frustrated at a friend, spouse, parent, or child engrossed in a digital conversation instead of the one they should be having with us. We've all experienced constant interruptions from buzzing, beeping, and ringing at dinners and meetings.

According to Sherry Turkle, students tell her that they long for eye contact with their parents. Brett and I find that amazing because this generation, having never known anything different,

shouldn't know what they're missing! But they do. Those built-in moments of the day that once guaranteed focused attention, such as the obligatory "How was your day, honey?" at the school pickup, are now moments of divided attention. Parents push the swing with one hand while scrolling through texts and emails with the other. Dinner-table conversation is stolen when Mom is watching television, Dad is checking the headlines on his device, and the kids are texting on their phones. Our kids learn their tech habits from us.

Online life also challenges our willingness and ability to be honest and vulnerable with others. Our social-media profiles are highly edited constructs of our lives for friends and family to browse (and perhaps to envy). We don't struggle online. We posture. This is largely responsible for what has become known as the "mommy wars." Browsing the pages of Pinterest or Instagram celebrities, it's hard to measure up to those moms who always seem put together, with clean houses and creative, decorated breakfast ideas for their always-bathed children.

Social media also fosters a false sense of intimacy and connection with others. Today we can have thousands of "friends" but, in reality, not have deep, meaningful relationships. We might even find ourselves wanting "followers" instead of actual friends. Remember that young people, who have never known what relationships were like before the digital age, won't have any context to distinguish deep relationships from manufactured online ones.

On the other hand, Jimmy Kimmel, in his frequent late-night-television-show segment called "Mean Tweets," demonstrates how

technology can make us forget the humanity of others. We're far more likely to say things online that we'd never say to someone's face. And we're more likely to engage in risky behavior we'd never consider in person. Many kids are leaving a digital footprint that will haunt them for the rest of their lives.

Often our kids will claim a so-called right to privacy to escape accountability. According to parenting expert Julie Hiramine, parents should know their kids' passwords for anything they do online. However, many parents are scandalized when she recommends this, feeling that it violates some sort of unspoken absolute of the digital age.[11] In junior high, my (Brett's) daughter asked for privacy on the Internet. But John and I don't even afford ourselves that sort of perk. Our wives have an all-access pass to our emails, social-media accounts, and online activities.

A third consequence of online life is that we lose touch with ourselves. The tendency today is to become curators of our own online museums for our carefully selected and polished moments. In doing so, we may think our personal brand of approved images and sound bites are the real us. Because we can only truly know ourselves in community, we lose touch with ourselves when we lose touch with others.

Online life also sells us the false impression that we can separate who we are into public and private realms. Particularly in the case of pornography addiction, kids cultivate deadly sins online under different identities, as if they aren't at the same time reshaping their own souls. On the other hand, they face pressure online to disconnect from their deeply held convictions.

Expressing Christian views on controversial issues like homo-sexuality, same-sex marriage, or transgender identity comes at a high cost, but "liking" the post of a friend often feels obligatory, even if he or she is boasting about a view or activity that violates Christian morality.

The Lies Technology Teaches Us

Technology today can also deceive teens, according to Dr. Kathy Koch, a popular speaker and an expert in educational psychology and learning styles. In her very helpful book *Screens and Teens: Connecting with Our Kids in a Wireless World*, Koch describes five lies communicated to teens (and us) in our tech-shaped culture.[12]

Lie #1: I am the center of my own universe.

Adolescence is a somewhat recent innovation, brought to life by messaging, marketing, music, and popular culture aimed directly at teens. Today, unlike ages past, teens can live in a world separate from adults. Technology also allows teens to live in online worlds separate from one another, worlds of their own making.

It's not unusual these days to see a group of teens hanging out together but focused only on their devices. As Dr. Koch points out, kids today have never known a world of limitations. Long gone are the days of buying entire albums with songs we don't like or developing entire rolls of film with pictures that don't turn out as we hoped. We're now the creators of playlists and photo albums

and online personalities. Even Google tracks our online behavior and delivers custom search results it thinks we desire.

Of course, reality doesn't always bend to our demands. We're forced to interact with others who have their own ideas and wishes that may conflict with ours. Kids who believe they're the center of their own universe are in for a world of hurt and disappointment. Even worse, they're falling for the very first lie: "You will be like God, knowing good and evil" (Gen. 3:5).

Lie #2: I deserve to be happy all the time.

The great irony of a culture with so many distractions and devices is that our kids can seem perpetually bored. The great tragedy is that so many of them struggle with apathy and depression. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), suicide is the second leading cause of death for ten- to twenty-four-year-olds.[13]

Today's technology promises kids immediate gratification. They can get what they want when they want it. Theirs is an on-demand world: movies, music, sexual pleasure, adventure, violence, revenge, gadgets, games.

Unless they learn differently, young people will absorb the three chief virtues of modern society: convenience, efficiency, and choice.[14] In other words, they'll learn by technological osmosis that the best life is one that is faster, easier, and on their own terms. Along the way, they'll miss developing the essential character qualities of patience, prudence, and perseverance.

Lie #3: I must have choices.

I (John) was in a small corner grocery store in Montego Bay, Jamaica. Fresh out of college, I had committed the next year to hosting short-term teams for a missions organization there. A dedicated morning-cereal guy, I was confused to find this store didn't have an aisle, or even a shelf, full of the choices I was accustomed to finding back in the States. Even worse, there were only three brands to choose from, and none of them was Honey Bunches of Oats!

Westerners have long been addicted to choice, and our technologies have only made it worse. There's always something better, newer, upgraded, and cooler. Infinite choices of movies, songs, games, tablets, phones, experiences, and relationships (real or virtual) teach kids that infinite choice is required for happiness and fulfillment.

Choice, in and of itself, isn't bad, of course. However, when kids are trapped in the lie that choices are necessary prerequisites to happiness, two things result. First, rather than seizing the opportunities in front of them, they will always be looking for the next better thing. Second, addiction to choice leads to ungratefulness.

Lie #4: I am my own authority.

One of the illusions of the modern world is that we are in control. Technology enables that illusion by giving us the world on our own terms. Digital reality is infinitely customizable. When so much of life is lived online, it's only a small jump to thinking that's the way all of reality should be as well.

The heart of moralistic therapeutic deism, the dominant worldview of our time that we discussed in an earlier chapter, is the mistaken assumption that this is our world, not God's. Craig Gay calls this "practical atheism," or the idea that even if God exists, we're the ones who run the world.[15] It's not difficult to see how our technologies foster this unspoken, but very real, impression.

Lie #5: Information is all I need, not teachers.

Parents and mentors have a lot of competition these days. So do pastors and teachers. Why seek wise counsel when kids can just google the answers to their questions? Why ask Mom and Dad, when Siri is always available?

In an earlier chapter, we discussed the many challenges of living in the information age. For example, kids are tempted to confuse information with knowledge and completely forgo the pursuit of wisdom. Here's another challenge: having all the answers at their fingertips teaches students that teachers aren't necessary. Gray hair used to indicate wisdom. Now it identifies someone who is out of touch.

Helping Kids Avoid Being Alone Together

So how can parents and mentors counter the tech tsunami engulfing our kids and families? An obvious practical step is to limit access to screen time as long as possible, especially smartphones. Parents face enormous pressure to help our kids keep up with

their friends, and it can feel like a losing battle. But stick to your guns and don't let the wrong considerations determine when and how certain technologies are introduced into your child's life. Develop a set of criteria, such as habits, character qualities, and indicators of maturity, to help you decide whether or not your child is ready.

Also, for families, implement technology fasts. Perhaps it's every day after dinner, Sunday afternoons (except for football!), one day a week, or weekends. If your family is already drowning with gadgets, any limits will seem excessive to your kids. So have a plan for how to replace the time.

Both Sherry Turkle and Kathy Koch recommend establishing device-free zones, times and places where everyone unplugs. Here are four:

> **1. The car.** As the parents of young children, Brett and I understand the benefits of movies, audiobooks, and games to pass the time on long road trips. However, most car rides should be tech-free. Obviously, texting while driving is dangerous. More than that, however, rides to and from school, church, and shopping are when parents have a captive audience.
>
> **2. The dinner table.** Research points to mealtimes as critical components of a healthy family and as indicators of a child's long-term success.[16]

Too often today, family meals are disrupted by technology that pulls each member into separate worlds.

3. Bedrooms. It's madness to allow children unfettered, unfiltered access to the Internet in the privacy of their bedrooms. Internet pornography is waiting for them there. Period. Also, glowing screens, midnight texts, and social media are obstacles to good rest. Parents should make their own bedroom a device-free zone as well. How much physical and emotional intimacy do our devices steal from us as couples? Set a nightly curfew when devices are retired until morning.

4. Vacations. Going away as a family is one of the best opportunities for deep relationship building. Don't let your devices get in the way.

Remember to use these device-free times wisely. Develop a list of questions for your kids that will help you dive into their beliefs, hopes, dreams, disappointments, and aspirations. Bring up a hot topic from the news that day or tell a story from your childhood. It doesn't have to be a serious discussion. Laugh together, think together, imagine together. Demand eye contact and dig deeper than "Yes," "No," and "I dunno" discussions. Initially it will be hard for both our kids and us, but it will be worth it.

At times we'll need to make difficult decisions to unplug for good from a device, an online activity, or an app. Involve your kids in these decisions. If you see an addiction develop, confront it early and work with your child to initiate appropriate boundaries and limits. In my family and Brett's, screens are to be used only in public areas. Isolation equals temptation.

There is simply no substitute for deliberately taking the time to know our kids on a personal level and opening up ourselves for them to know us. Only in the context of a true relationship can we demonstrate to them who they are beyond their gadgets, profiles, and online posturing. They need to hear that from us.

This requires us to be appropriately vulnerable with our kids. We need to be willing to share the hard memories as well as the good ones, and our struggles and failures along with our successes and wins. That way, they'll see that our identities are secure outside of our social-media projections, and that we, too, are real people who long to belong and be known.

The glowing rectangles aren't going away. Short of some sort of apocalypse, we'll never again know a dark, quiet world. Our kids inhabit an online world, but we can help them know that they, and everyone they meet, are more than their digital appendages.

Discussion Questions

1. Have you ever lost your phone or handheld device? What was your reaction? Have you ever witnessed someone whose reaction revealed a deep addiction to his or her technology?

2. Have you or anyone you know ever been deeply wounded on social media? What happened?

3. Which of the five technology lies have you experienced or witnessed? What happened?

4. Do you have a device-free zone in your life? If so, what is it and why did you implement it?

15. For a helpful description of the postmodern worldview, see W. Gary Phillips, William E. Brown, and John Stonestreet, *Making Sense of Your World: A Biblical Worldview*, 2nd ed. (Salem, WI: Sheffield, 2008), 48–58.

16. James E. Marcia et al., *Ego Identity: A Handbook for Psychosocial Research* (New York: Springer, 1993). For a helpful summary, see "Marcia's States of Adolescent Identity Development," YouTube video, posted by Tiffany Dickie, January 31, 2014, www.youtube.com/watch?v=a8HIY_bqrVo. Only a portion of Marcia's theory is discussed here. We're indebted to Dr. Peter Cha, my (John's) seminary professor at Trinity International University, who first pointed me to Marcia's theory and applied it to the context of the church and home.

17. This is our paraphrase of Steven Garber, who rightly points out that for a worldview to last, it must be "sufficient for the questions and crises …, particularly the challenge of modern and postmodern consciousness with its implicit secularization and pluralization." See Steven Garber, *Fabric of Faithfulness*, 51, 122–32.

18. A terrific resource on how and why to walk *with* kids is Jeff Myers, *Grow Together: The Forgotten Story of How Uniting Generations Unleashes Epic Spiritual Potential* (Colorado Springs: Summit Ministries, 2014). See also the accompanying film, available at www.growtogether.org.

19. Garber, *Fabric of Faithfulness,* 51.

Chapter 6

1. Sherry Turkle, *Alone Together: Why We Expect More from Technology and Less from Each Other* (New York: Basic Books, 2011). Her February 2012 TED talk "Connected, but Alone?" offers a helpful summary of the book, as well as many of the points we discuss in this chapter. See www.ted.com/talks /sherry_turkle_alone_together?language=en.

2. Sherry Turkle, "Alone Together" (speech, TEDxUIUC, Champaign, IL, February 2011), www.youtube.com/watch?v=MtLVCpZIiNs.

3. Sherry Turkle, *The Second Self: Computers and the Human Spirit* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1984).

4. Sherry Turkle, *Life on the Screen: Identity in the Age of the Internet* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1997).

5. Turkle, "Connected, but Alone?"

6. Henry David Thoreau, "Where I Lived and What I Lived For," in *Walden: An Annotated Edition*, ed. Walter Harding (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1995), 89.

7. See Sally Andrews et al., "Beyond Self-Report: Tools to Compare Estimated and Real-World Smartphone Use," *PLOS One* 10, no. 10 (October 2015), journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0139004.

8. Bureau of Labor Statistics, American Time Use Survey, 2004–2009, cited in Eleanor Krause and Isabel V. Sawhill, "How Free Time Became Screen Time," Brookings Institution, September 13, 2016, www.brookings.edu /blog/social-mobility-memos/2016/09/13/how-free-time-became-screen -time/.

9. Glenn Enoch et al., *The Nielson Total Audience Report: Q1 2016* (New York: Nielson, 2016), 4, cited in Jacqueline Howard, "Americans Devote More Than 10 Hours a Day to Screen Time, and Growing," CNN, July 29, 2016, www.cnn.com/2016/06/30/health/americans-screen-time-nielsen/.

10. We're grateful to John's colleague Shane Morris for articulating these consequences in this very helpful format. Shane has been thinking and writing about technology for some time, and these thoughts were communicated to John in an email, October 5, 2016.

11. See Julie Hiramine's terrific work at Generations of Virtue, www.generationsofvirtue.org.

12. For a full description of each of these lies, and to read the single best book available for parents on helping kids navigate the digital age, see Kathy Koch, *Screens and Teens: Connecting with Our Kids in a Wireless World* (Chicago: Moody, 2015).

13. See Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, "Suicide Trends among Persons Aged 10–24 Years—United States 1994–2012," *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report* 64, no. 8 (March 2015): 201–5, www.cdc.gov /mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm6408a1.htm.

14. See Craig M. Gay, introduction, in *The Way of the (Modern) World: Or, Why It's Tempting to Live as If God Doesn't Exist* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 1–28.

15. See Gay, *Way of the (Modern) World*, 2.

16. Research cited in Anne Fishel, "The Most Important Thing You Can Do with Your Kids? Eat Dinner with Them," *Washington Post*, January 12, 2015, www.washingtonpost.com/posteverything/wp/2015/01/12/the-most -important-thing-you-can-do-with-your-kids-eat-dinner-with-them/?utm _term=.b61005c506d0.

Chapter 7

1. Diana West, *The Death of the Grown-up: How America's Arrested Development is Bringing Down Western Civilization* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2007), 1.

2. This is a very brief summary of the story West tells. We've left out a lot of details, but the main point is that adolescence as a stage of life is fabricated and recent. See West, *Death of the Grown-up*, chaps. 1–2.

3. West, *Death of the Grown-up*, 6.

4. Mark Regnerus, "Sex Is Cheap: Why Young Men Have the Upper Hand in Bed, Even When They're Failing in Life," *Slate,* February 25, 2011, www.slate.com/articles/double_x/doublex/2011/02/sex_is_cheap.single .html. See also Austin Institute for the Study of Family and Culture, "The Economics of Sex: It's a Tough Market out There," accessed March 2014, www.austin-institute.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/V10-Resource -Guide.pdf. Though Regnerus didn't invent the phrase "the economics of sex," he has offered the most accessible explanation. This description of the idea first appeared in John Stonestreet and Sean McDowell, *Same-Sex Marriage: A Thoughtful Approach to God's Design for Marriage* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2014), 114.

5. Regnerus, "Sex Is Cheap."

6. Pope Benedict XVI, *Light of the World: The Pope, the Church, and the Signs of the Times; A Conversation with Peter Seewald*, trans. Michael J. Miller and Adrian J. Walker (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2010), chap. 5.

7. Del Tackett, founder of *The Truth Project*, said this in a speech given at a private gathering of leaders in January 2009.

8. David Brooks, *The Road to Character* (New York: Random House, 2015), 54.

9. C. S. Lewis, *The Abolition of Man* (New York: HarperOne, 2001), 26.