



REFORMERS RECOMMENDS:

BOOKS ON TECHNOLOGY AND MEDIA

By Thomas Eglinton

We live in a technology and media driven age. Our lives are easily filled with our phones, computers and televisions and the content they put in front of us – movies, social media feeds, Youtube videos, sports and television series.

As Christians it is important for us to think carefully about how we use technology. We are called to redeem our time and renew our minds. But how can we do that? How can we approach technology and media in a way that glorifies God? These books will help you consider these questions.

The first three books on this list seek to address issues of how technology itself should be considered. The last two look at the actual content that is placed in front of us – how should we view movies, advertising, television shows and more.

12 WAYS YOUR PHONE IS CHANGING YOU - Tony Reinke is a brilliantly engaging writer. He weaves together biblical themes and references with quotations from multitude of other thoughtful works while bringing his own insights that tend to bring clarity to the ideas he is trying to communicate.

In 12 Ways Your Phone is Changing You, Tony simply highlights a dozen ways that our smartphones impact our lives, relationships and the way we think. Some of these ideas are obvious, some are more unexpected but the value of this book is that Tony makes you stop and think about it. The hope is that once you have thought about it, you are more aware of how you are changing and you can put in place steps to ensure you are conforming to Christ's image, not to the image of your phone.

THE NEXT STORY - Written in 2011, Tim Challies shows remarkable foresight and depth of analysis in his book 'The Next Story'. Tim discusses how technology itself shapes our view on various topics, from communication to truth to how we think deeply (or not as the case may be). This book is so helpful because it shows you what is happening to you as you use technology even though that impact is often occurring without your knowledge.

The digital history that Challies gives is brilliant and his chapter on Truth and Authority is certainly a stand out for me.

OBSESSED WITH YOUR PHONE - If reading a whole book sounds daunting and you would like something that takes less time to get through – consider starting with this booklet by Biblical Counsellor William P Smith. He highlights just a few things to think about in terms of how you personally view your phone and then gives some very practical suggestions to start being more in control of the technology in your life.

PLUGGED IN - So how should we approach the things we watch, read, listen to and play? Daniel Strange gives us some ideas in Plugged In. Instead of running for the hills, Daniel wants to help you engage with the culture around you. He wants you to be able to watch a movie or a television show or listen to a hit new song and do two things with it: see what message it is preaching to you and be able to speak the gospel to people who are only really interested in what they saw last night. The last few chapters are case studies in engaging with culture and are particularly helpful.

COMPETING SPECTACLES - Tony Reinke strikes again with this short book. This time, Tony has tackled the content that we view through our technology rather than the technology itself. The title might seem a little odd (I thought it was referring to glasses initially!) but the spectacles are those things that capture our attention for a time.

The first half of the book is dedicated to showing how humans are born spectators. We love a spectacle and always have. What's changed is that the spectacles we desire have become more easily accessible and far more pervasive.

The second half of the book is where it all comes together. Tony does a brilliant job of showing us that the spectacle we were designed for is the glory of Christ and that ultimately we should be consumed with chasing a vision of that. Searching for spectacles other than Christ will just ensure that we are never satisfied (Prov 27:20).