

SCREEN SANITY

WEEK 1 – MINDFULNESS

MONDAY – Unprecedented times



Philippians 4: 6-7 *“Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”*

We are living in unprecedented times. Never before has technology played such a vital role in all our lives. Never before have we had so much information at our fingertips, so many opportunities to connect in so many different ways. During the pandemic technology became a lifeline for many. Those who had to work from home, those whose school lives were interrupted, those who were homebound. We have no history to look back on, no previous generation to advise us, but we can ask God who freely gives, for wisdom as we navigate our way.

Psalms 127 vs 3–5 reminds us that children are a heritage from God. *Behold, children are a heritage from the LORD, the fruit of the womb a reward. Like arrows in the hand of a warrior are the children of one's*

youth.

Blessed is the man who fills his quiver with them!

Our children and families are indeed an inheritance from God and we want to do all that we can to make sure that they develop healthy screen habits. During this series we will be looking at how we can ensure that screen time does not disrupt family lives. We will be discussing how to break free from the distractions of technology and use it responsibly so that we will not be distracted from life in Christ.

Over the next three weeks we will be looking at ways to navigate some of the pitfalls of using our devices and discover opportunities to live life in abundance.



Prayer: God You know how easy it is for us to be caught up in these captivating screens. Teach us to be wise in our use of the technology we have. AMEN

TUESDAY – Be present



Psalm 62 : 1–6 *Only God can save me, and I calmly wait for Him.*

God alone is the mighty rock that keeps me safe and the fortress where I am secure. I feel like a shaky fence or a sagging wall. How long will all of you attack and assault me? You want to bring me down from my place of honour. You love to tell lies, and when your words are kind, hatred hides in your heart. Only God gives inward peace, and I depend on Him. God alone is the mighty rock that keeps me safe, and He is the fortress where I feel secure.

The Bible has much to say about knowledge. If we are to grow we have to keep learning – every day there are opportunities to learn something new. When we understand how algorithms work we begin to see how our devices can draw our attention to trivial matters. How often does this happen to us? We are drawn to check to see what is happening instead of giving our full attention to what is really important to us.

Be present. A family who sits down to their evening meal together around a table makes time to listen

to one another. Giving each person the opportunity to share the highs and lows of the day keep us connected. Knowledge is passed on through meaningful conversations, values are taught and family bonds are strengthened. Being present to one another is a precious gift.

Be present to God who gives us inner peace. Be present to God and wait calmly for Him. Be present to God when media information has filled you with distress. **Be present.**



Prayer: God of all knowledge and wisdom, teach us to set aside times when we can listen to Your voice of wisdom and look to You for guidance in all things. Teach us to be present to You. AMEN

WEDNESDAY – Mindful



Psalm 37: 7 CEV *Be patient and trust the LORD. Don't let it bother you when all goes well for those who do sinful things.*

We live in an age of anxiety, our devices have crept into our lives and we are more aware than ever of soaring prices, corruption, threats of war and unrest. People are more despondent and negative; the corrupt seems to thrive all this can rob us of our peace. Our devices can become like enemies attacking and assaulting our minds. How then do we counteract all this negativity and live mindful of God's spirit working in our lives?

We need a place of safety, a rock to which we can cling in stormy times, a place where we can share our hearts and restore our sanity and well-being. Jesus calls us to seek

out such a place where we can be uninterrupted by technology and allow Him to soothe our fears.

Psalm 61: 2 says *"Lead me to the Rock, that is higher than I."*

We need a place where we can share our values, a place where we can honestly grow closer to God and to one another. Time spent with a trusted friend over a cup of coffee can restore our minds. A small group where we put aside our phones and tablets is a place where we can share, learn and pray together. A place where we gather and look one another in the eye as we journey in our exploration of how to be faithful Christ followers. Maybe today is the day to consider joining such a group.



Prayer: Gracious God, just for today help me to make time to wait on You in quietness and allow You to restore my spirit. Show me to a safe harbour where I can find deep fellowship and encouragement as I walk with You. AMEN

THURSDAY – Boundaries and bedtimes



Psalm 4: 8 *In peace I will lie down and sleep, for You alone, LORD, make me dwell in safety.*

Rest is important, God reminds us over and over in scripture to rest. **Exodus 23: 12** *“Six days do your work, but on the seventh day do not work, so that you may be refreshed.* It would seem that we are not very good at taking care of ourselves in this way!

How much rest does your teenager get in an already busy life with studies, sport and socialising eating up much of their day? Recent studies show that teens who are allowed to use their phones during the night are more vulnerable to messages received in the late hours. Upsets with friends can keep them from sleep and predators who stalk know this. Besides not getting the rest they need they may become anxious and restless.

A ‘bedtime’ for phones is a way of ensuring a good night’s rest. Both adults and the young need to

‘switch off’ and have quiet in order to restore our minds and bodies. There may be resistance, but either insisting on switching off or removing the phone from teens will prove to be a wise decision.

Jesus knew the value of times of rest; times when He became still in the presence of His Father. **Matthew 6: 6** *When you pray, go into a room alone and close the door. Pray to your Father in private. He knows what is done in private and will reward you.*

God calls us to a life of serenity, of mindfulness and patience. When we are distracted by constant onslaughts of media we lose this and find it difficult to hear the still small voice of God. Just for today, try to set aside some time for stillness and quiet.



Prayer: God our redeemer and our place of rest, help us to set boundaries for ourselves and those in our care. AMEN

FRIDAY – Wise living



Romans 12 : 1-2 *Dear friends, God is good. So I beg you to offer your bodies to Him as a living sacrifice, pure and pleasing. That's the most sensible way to serve God. Don't be like the people of this world, but let God change the way you think. Then you will know how to do everything that is good and pleasing to Him.*

Apart from the Covid pandemic we currently have a mental health pandemic amongst children, teens and adults. Social media is addictive and during the Covid pandemic it has influenced our lives and thinking widely. In a study done fairly recently*, many teens reported that they did not communicate with their parents because the latter were so involved with their devices, either on business calls or checking Facebook or Instagram!

God calls us to a healthy lifestyle, one that will bring peace and stability to our lives. So how do we model a balanced life? Nothing can replace communication. People

who pray, play, eat and exercise together will be people who communicate. Discussion groups will stretch the mind. A walk in nature can give us a new perspective on life.

1 Corinthians 9: 24- (CEV) Gives us some wise counsel about staying the course *“You know that many runners enter a race, and only one of them wins the prize. So run to win! Athletes work hard to win a crown that cannot last, but we do it for a crown that will last forever. I don't run without a goal.”* We have a goal – to live Christ centred lives. Let us run with perseverance!



Prayer: Lord God, teach us to live our lives in such a way that we will bring honour to your Name. Keep us focused on Jesus who lived and loved and gave His life for us. May our vision each day be to follow in His footsteps. AMEN