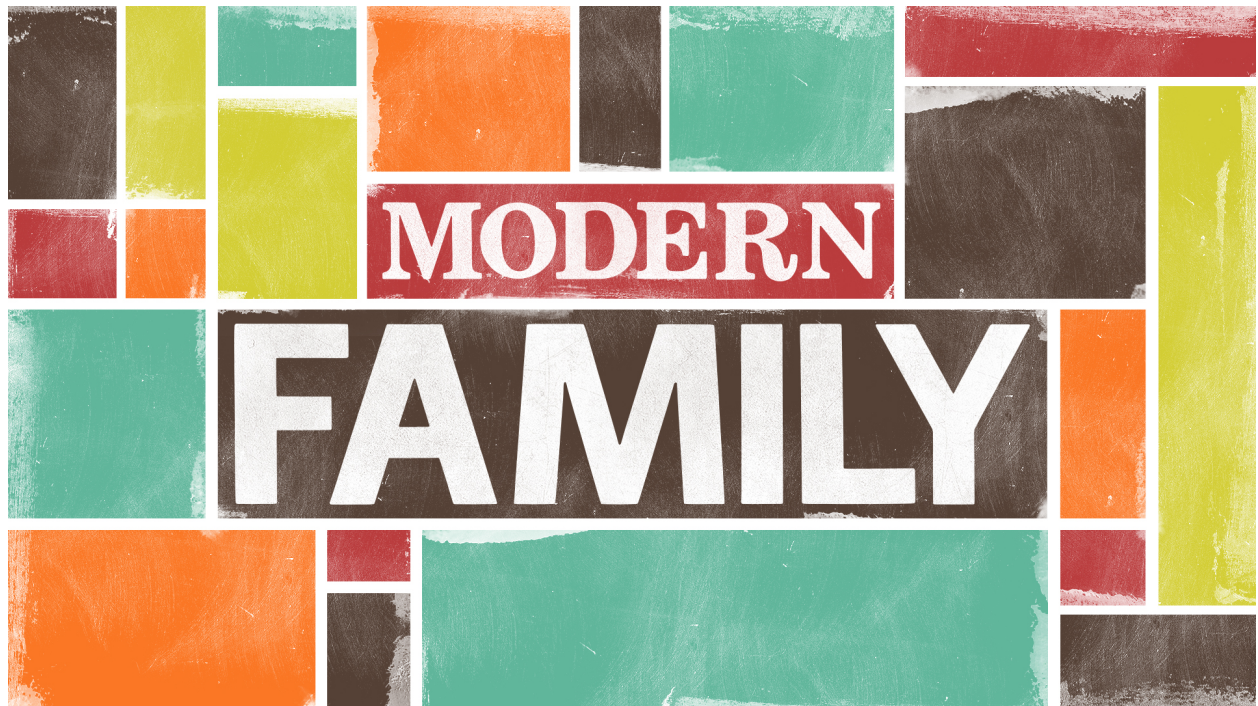




HILL COUNTRY
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External Challenges

Tim Hawks, Lead Pastor

September 1, 2013

Well good morning. I want to welcome you to our Lakeline Campus and also those who are joining us at our Steiner Ranch Campus. It's so great to be together to worship and learn. And we sit at the pressipus of an unprecedented moment, actually starting this week Explore God kicks off. We have almost 350 churches that are participating in Explore God and literally thousands and thousands of discussion groups taking place all over the city. I just found out

this weekend that Austin Police Department is going to have an Explore God discussion group at their headquarters, their academy, and at every one of their substations around the city (congregation clapping). You may not be aware of this, but APD has 26 Christian pastors who are their volunteer chaplains. So every time you drive by a crime scene or an automobile accident and you see that jacket with Chaplain on the back of it, that's one of the pastors in this city that's out there with our police force. We're so grateful for Chief Acevedo and his willingness to engage Christianity right in the heart of the APD. So we're also working on seeing if we can get something going with our EMS as well, both in Travis and Williamson Counties, so just keep praying for this. God's doing incredible things. People are listening and participating in the conversation.

We personally sent out 34 invitations in our neighborhood to about 60 people, and we've gotten some mixed reviews. About a third of the people responded back and said, "We'd love to come, but our calendar won't let us." About a third of the people responded back and said, "We'd love to come if you were talking about something different than God." And so right now we have 17 people that are coming to our house this Wednesday night for our first Explore God group. Almost all of them are neighbors. We've got one other couple that's coming that I met in a restaurant and just got into a conversation and they're coming to our house on Wednesday night. So I trust that you guys are involved in this.

This is a historic moment, and the more people that participate in having these conversations, the broader the impact on our city. It's our prayer that over the next seven weeks that the City of Austin would move from a place where people are afraid to engage in conversations about purpose, about eternity, about God, about life, about the validity of Christianity, that they would turn from that and begin to discuss it. That this would be normal, but that's going to happen primarily if each of us does our part in engaging the people in our sphere of influence in these discussion groups. So really I encourage you to do that. This Thursday night we are having a citywide prayer meeting. It's going to take place at Great Hills Baptist Church. It's for anybody that wants to come. We're going to have about 300 pastors that are going to be there together in the same room at the same time, so if you want to commit some terrible crime this would be the perfect time to do it. Maybe eliminate some of the fat from the church, literally. We're going to be there and we invite you guys to come and just pray. Pray that God does amazing things in our city.

We've been in this sermon series called Modern Family, and we're wrapping it up today. In the Modern Family we've learned a couple of things. One is that the principle is still the same from the beginning of time until the present, and

that is that life is a team sport. It was intended to be lived in teams. That's very key coming from the nature of the Trinity, God the Father, God the Son, God the Spirit living together relationally in harmony. One God, team, teamwork together, and when God created humanity in His image, male and female, he created us to be part of a team. And so he created us with maleness, and we need men. And he created us with femaleness, and we need females. And if you've just got the maleness it's not very good. And if you've just got the femaleness it's better, but it's still not very good. (congregation laughs) So we come together, we work together as a team. And God created it so that male and female would come together and form a permanent bond and create a family, and out of that would populate society, would fill the planet up with people that are growing and nurtured and representing God. And so along the way there's a lot that goes into that. There's a lot that goes into the relationships, there's a lot that goes into the commitment, there's a lot that goes into becoming the kind of person that someone would want to be with, someone could be with throughout the course of their life. And we've also recognized that there's a lot working against us. There are some things that are internal, inside the family that work against us. Some of those things are inside our very soul as individuals. So even if we're single, there's stuff that's inside of us that works against us. And last week Russell challenged that, and talked about the need to address the selfish desires that snowball into hurting us and other people, and to learn how to be a peacemaker both in our own relationships and in the relationships of our extended family. That's not the only place where challenges come. Challenges come from the outside as well, and today I want us to tackle some of the challenges that come from the outside.

When you think about the challenges that come from the outside, if you were saying, "What is the thing that makes it the hardest for the family or for individuals to thrive in our culture?" I'll just give you a second - what would be your top two? Let's think about it - what would be the top two. You would say, "These two things make it really hard." (someone from the congregation yells out T.V.) Well some people think T.V. Let me give you a couple of them. So a survey was done in 2006, you've got them in your head, survey was done in 2006 of a group of families listing off what they considered in order the major issues, top to bottom. Number one they identified was anti-Christian culture. Anti-Christian culture. Number two divorce. Number three busyness; interesting busyness. Number four lack of father figure, number five lack of discipline, number six financial pressure, number seven lack of communication, number eight negative media influences which I think is the same as anti-Christian culture. Number nine balance of work and family, which sounds like busyness to me, and then number ten is materialism. I don't know if your top

two hit that, but today I'm going to tackle three of those. Culture, technology, and busyness.

Now when I tell you I'm going to tackle those three, let me just say that if you're looking for me to give you three steps and then bam! Life is easy, everything's wonderful, you've come to the wrong sermon. That's not what I'm going to give you. Actually life is pretty complex and for me to oversimplify this would be unfair and unfortunate. So what I'm going to give you is I'm going to give you some principles that you can apply to the various situations in your life whether you're married, whether you're a young adult, whether you're a child, wherever you are I'm going to give you some questions and some principles on how to deal with these things. And I want to start in the word of God, so let's open to 1 Corinthians, chapter 6. As we open to the Word of God, God has something to say to us about how to be successful living our lives, not only in this culture, but in all cultures in all times. It's not like today is the hardest time to ever live, and greater Austin Texas is the hardest place to ever have lived in. There are other times in history and other places on the globe that are actually harder than here. And these principles apply to us across the board.

What I want you to see in this passage that is very significant, is that the Corinthian church was born out of Paul and others preaching the gospel. And when the people heard the gospel, many of them responded. When they heard the message that God was reconciling humans, fallen, sinful humanity to himself through his Son Jesus Christ because Jesus Christ had actually taken the punishment on himself. And that by putting their trust in Jesus Christ their sins would be forgiven, and that they would have a relationship with God, many people trusted in that message, put their faith in Jesus Christ. That didn't change the fact that they were Corinthians living in Corinth, and the city of Corinth had a reputation. It was the major trade center between east and west where it was located, and because of that it kind of had a little bit of a Las Vegas feel on steroids. It was the place that people who were getting away from their home and family, sailors traveling from place-to-place, business people traveling from place-to-place, that was the place to play. And in Corinth everybody played. In fact, it was so astoundingly over the top in Corinth that to be called a Corinthian is similar to be called kind of a pervert in our culture today. Like somebody that's just out of control – that was Corinth. And the Pagan worship got right in the middle of it. In fact, there were estimated at the time of Paul's writing about 10,000 working women who worked the temples there, and it was not uncommon in one of the ways that the priests of these Pagan groups would get their money in was to charge people to come to the temple and be involved with a priestess. That was common. In the middle of that the Corinthians had adopted this very laidback lifestyle and it's seen in the slogans that were common in their people, and Paul challenges those.

In verse 12 of chapter 6 we see the first slogan. It says:

“Everything is permissible for me” --

Now that's a Corinthian slogan. That's what they would say. “Everything is permissible for me” translated into modern words, “Nothing is off limits.” That was their deal. And so now that I'm a Christian, now that I've been saved, now that my sins have been forgiven, what's to stop me from going into Pagan temples, engaging in temple prostitution, worshiping in settings where all the boys hang out where people do fun things. What's to stop me from doing that. And watch what Paul says. He says:

“Everything is permissible for me’ - but not everything is beneficial.”

Now here's the first question that you can apply personally to every life decision. The question you're asking is, in this particular setting – “Everything is permissible for me – but not everything is beneficial.” In other words, is this activity for me and my family, is this beneficial to us? **Is this beneficial?** Does this provide anything wholesome, anything good, anything that would promote human thriving, anything that would develop my character, anything that would honor God? Everything might be permissible to the Corinthians, but the question is are any of these things beneficial. He goes on to say, he repeats it again. He says:

“Everything is permissible for me’ - but I will not be mastered by anything.”

So here's the second question that you would ask yourself when you're trying to determine whether to participate in something. And that question is, **Does This Create Bondage or Freedom?** In other words, if I engage in this behavior or this activity, if we do this as a family or if I do this as an individual will this free me up or does this tie me down? Does this create bondage for me? Let me just give you some examples. States in the U.S. have begun to basically legalize substances that in the past were considered illegal. And we've got some substances that are actually considered legal that people can use. The question you have to ask yourself is, “Do those create enslavement, do they create bondage?” I mean one of the things I told my boys, like growing up in Texas I've told my boys, I've said, listen son. The number of men that I've watched, grown men go to their knees trying to kick the habit of dipping snuff when facing a doctor that's telling them, “Guys you're going to have a death sentence if you don't stop this.” Like why would you put yourself in a position of that kind of bondage? Why would you do that? Why would you do that? It's not

just that, it's not just substances there are other things as well. You realize that people get addicted to the limelight? We're going to talk about this in technology in just a few minutes – how technology affects us. When people get addicted to needing to be liked, to be followed, to have people pay attention to them and will do all kinds of things, will promote all kinds of things to get people's attention. Needing to be in the limelight. Do you really want that kind of addiction? Certainly there's nothing off limits about moving to that more expensive subdivision. Getting that nicer home, that's not morally an issue, but let me ask you this. If by upgrading you now find yourself worrying every day, "If I lose my job, if they downgrade my business, if we have some unexpected medical bills I don't know how I'm going to keep it all afloat." Isn't that a form of bondage? That has not freed you up. That's put all kinds of pressure on you, and so even purchasing decisions can be thought through a lot. It's not off limits to upgrade your lifestyle. The question is though, will you be free when you do that or does it create greater bondage.

Paul goes on from there and hits the second slogan. The second slogan is verse 13:

"Food for the stomach and the stomach for food" –

You say "What does that mean?" He's talking about what's natural. You know food is natural, it grows natural, it's physical, it's in the world, it's not bad. It's amoral. The stomach, the hunger of the stomach, you need to feed the body, so food for the stomach and the stomach for food, what Paul's actually saying here is what is natural is good. I mean that was their slogan – "If it's natural it's good." We kind of think that way, don't we? If we find a substance in nature, obviously it's good because it's natural. Almost as if Mother Nature always is good, though we know there are certain things in nature you better not eat them or they'll kill you. Mother Nature's not as nice as you might think she is. Here's what they were saying. What they were saying is if there's something in the physical world and I have the power to participate in it, why would you stop me? In other words, if I have the capability of having sex, why wouldn't I just do that? It's natural isn't it? That sounds an awful lot like what we would say today.

Notice the response Paula says. He says:

"Food for the stomach and the stomach for food" – but God will destroy them both."

In other words, the stomach is short lived, food is short lived, this life in which we live, the physical world is short lived, it's not going to last forever. And then he says:

"The body is not meant for sexual immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. By his power God raised the Lord from the dead and he will raise us also."

What he's saying is, your bodies may be natural, but your person is eternal. And someday you're going to stand in the presence of God. And so your life is more about the things of God than your life is about simply experiencing the physical world around you and what it has in it. Which leads us to our third question when you're trying to figure out, "Do I participate, do I not?" "Is this something good or is this something bad?" The third question is this: "Does this activity, does this behavior, does this attitude, does it have value before God?" **Does This Have Value Before God?** In other words, if I and the family or the people around me, if we make a decision to do something, embrace something, believe something, follow something, are we going to be able to stand before God and say "Look God, here's what we did." Now those questions are intensely practical because you can constantly be asking yourself these questions. "Is it beneficial?" Young adults, you can ask yourself - "Is whatever I'm getting ready to do, is this beneficial?" I can really wrestle with that. I can ask the question, "Is this going to give me freedom or bondage?" "Am I going to find out if I do this that I get more wrapped up or tied up or am I going to find myself more free?"

And then the final question is, "Am I going to be able to stand before God someday and say, 'God this is what I did with my life.'" If you will take those three questions and begin to apply those in your life you're going to find all kinds of insight from God. The same issues that were in Corinth are the same issues that are in Austin today.

Now what I want to do is make a move because I've given you some questions to work with. Now I want to tackle these three challenges. So we're going to take them head on, three big challenges in the world in which we live today that I think we have to deal with. And the first one I want to deal with is culture. It's culture. Culture is the beliefs and attitudes that are around us that are expressed in all kinds of ways, in our entertainment, in our music, in our art, in our politics, in our education system. It's kind of the beliefs and the feel all around us. And culture has with it the possibility of both being positive and being negative. Let's just take this week. This past week we saw a commemoration of Martin Luther King, Jr. and today our culture is a culture that embraces racial equality. Fifty years ago it didn't, but today for the

majority of Americans, we think it's terrible if somebody is discriminated against simply based on the color of their skin or their ethnic origin. That's a wonderful thing about our culture today, and we ought to be excited and proud of that. At the same time while we are celebrating something good in our culture, Miley Cyrus was teaching us a new word - twerking. Now for those of you who don't know what that word is yet, you don't need to go look it up. It's not worthy of your time. But for the rest of you who were appalled by that, you realize the directions people will go and the things they will do to get attention. Some of the most, just kind of, honestly embarrassing ways. Both of those things are part of the culture in which we live today; one good and one not so good. So when you think about culture how do you think about culture in a way that you personally, and if you're leading a family, that you function in this culture. Well let me just say that if there's a part of you that looks at the culture around us and you grieve in your soul, you just say "Oh God I wish it weren't this way," that's good. That's a kingdom impulse. You see for every person that has the Holy Spirit and the hope of eternity and the hope of the kingdom, you long for a day when righteousness is normal, when peace is something that's universal, when justice is everywhere, when people treat others well and love is just part of everything we do. You long for that day, that's a kingdom impulse and that's coming. That will be here some day when Jesus Christ returns.

But in the meantime there are three reactions that you can have when it comes to culture. The first one is just criticize, rail against it, and then isolate yourself from it. Like "Everything around me is bad, America is going to hell, the next generation is all off their rocker. I hate everything that is happening in our world. Let me just pull back to me and mine and I'll stay away from it all." Here's the problem. The Pharisees tried that and Jesus warned them, "Listen it's not what is on the outside that actually ruins you. It's what's coming from the inside." In other words, what's on the inside is where evil starts from. In other words, the culture didn't make me do it. I did it because it was coming from here (points to the heart). I responded to the culture around me. There have been many abuses that have taken place in monastery settings, and so just retreating from the world doesn't guarantee you are safe.

The second is what I think most Christians do today in our culture, and that is just go along and hope for the best. "This is the culture we live in, this is the day and age when we're going, a lot of our friends or doing this, people are doing this, other families are doing this, everybody I know is doing this so I just kind of go along with it and just hope that it works out. I just hope that it kind of comes together."

A third and more positive way to approach to this when it comes to culture is to establish values. **Culture: Establish Values.** The antidote for succumbing to culture or for running from culture is to have God-focused values that you've predetermined, that you've built into your life that you have them operating in your life on a daily basis. Most of us have never taken the time to sit down and actually think through and write out our values, much less if you're married and you have kids develop a list of values and begin to incorporate that and teach that. The positive benefit of values is kind of helping you navigate the culture is so significant because what it does is it begins to give you a positive why behind the things that you don't participate in in the culture, and it also makes you a positive yes vote for the things in the culture that are good. Too many Christians are seen as people that are just negative all the time, but when something is good in our culture, it fits the values that you hold to promote that, be positive about that. It also gives you a good platform to teach and train children. So you overhear the music on your kid's iPod because he hasn't learned yet that his hearing is going to be as bad as yours someday because you did this too. But you're hearing the music and as the music unfolds you're kind of appalled by this music and so you start saying to your son, "I just can't believe you're listening to that trash. What's wrong with you? You and all your friends are worthless. Your generation doesn't have any moral values. How come you guys are so horrible" - implication we were wonderful? Ha ha, ha ha, ha ha. I just provided my own laugh track. Sometimes I have to do that. (congregation laughs)

Much better than that is this: "Son, one of our family values is compassion. I want us to listen to this music. It sounds like in this music that these guys treat women in a horrible way. What they're saying about them, what they want to do to them. Let's do some evaluation. How can we as an individual promote this idea of love and compassion? You don't want to do that girls, do you? Like you don't think of girls that way, do you? Do you see what's happening? In the one sense I'm just bashing my son and I'm just bashing his people, his age, his peers, and what I've done is now I've become judgmental and obsolete. If I have a value of compassion, that's what one of my values and we're sitting down and talking about it, now he's engaged in a discussion where he has to start thinking and making decisions. And not necessarily say that all of his music is now gone or he completely agrees, but at least you're in the discussion of something positive. You're trying to purport something positive to him about the world in which he lives than simply saying, "What you do is trash. I'm done with you." And like "You're going to quit that." And so the values proposition, establishing values is key.

Actually I did a whole sermon series on this in 1998, like back before the turn of the century. Before the turn of the millennium, called Real Family Values, on

how to walk through the Bible, identify values and actually come up with a personal code of values. You don't have to be married to do this. You can walk through and come up with your own personal code of values, and then for your family if you're married, develop that. And just because you don't have kids anymore, if you're older and don't have kids anymore, it's still a really positive thing to guide you in a culture that is challenging at best. So you can go on our website, you can get that and that will help you out.

The next area we want to talk about is the area of technology. And technology is a big, big deal. Let me show you.

Video begins with the following information provided:

Social Media is living, breathing, young, old, frustrating, mysterious, now, powerful, fluid, raw, your customer, and revolutionary.

One billion strong on Facebook making it the 3rd largest country in the world. #1 China, 2nd India, and 3rd USA.

Over 50% of the world's population is under 30 years old.

Each day 20% of Google searches have never been searched before.

In 10 years over 40% of the Fortune 500 will no longer be here.

In 10 years over 40% of the Fortune 400 will no longer be here.

In 10 years over 40% of the Fortune 300 will no longer be here.

Social Media has become the #1 activity on the Web. It even impacts our offline relationships.

1 in 5 couples meet online.

1 in 5 divorces are blamed on Facebook.

What happens in Vegas stays on Facebook, Twitter, Flickr, You Tube.

The Ford Explorer launch on Facebook generated more traffic than a Super Bowl Ad.

Generation Y and Z consider email passé.

Some universities have stopped distributing email accounts.

Kindergartens are learning on iPads, not on chalkboards.

69% of parents are “friends” with their children on social media.

92% of children under the age of 2 have a digital shadow.

Every second 2 new members join Linked In. That's like the entire enrollment of the Ivy League joining Linked In Every Day!

Social gamers will buy \$6 Billion in virtual goods by 2013. Moviegoers will buy only \$2.5 Billion in real goods (popcorn).

You Tube is the 2nd largest search engine in the world.

Every minute 72 hours of video are uploaded to You Tube.

Video Ends

Okay you say, “I already know that, so what's the big deal?” Well let's talk about the big deal for just a second. I want to talk about the difference between smart and dumb technology. Okay, let me tell you what dumb technology is. Dumb technology is that which interacts with a task. So you could be washing your clothes on a washboard or you could be throwing them in a washing machine and pushing a button and going on about your life. That's dumb technology, and up until really about 10 or 12 years ago that was the majority of our technology.

Today we have smart technology, and smart technology by the nature of the kind of technology it is actually interacts with us. It communicates with us, it picks up what we're thinking about and the choices we've made and feeds things back to us. It shapes us in many ways. And my challenge to us is to consider how it is shaping us. Let me just kind of give you some things to think about. When it comes to communication, how did smart technology change that? When it comes to relationships, how does smart technology change that? When it comes to the way our brains actually work, is smart technology having any impact on that? Let me give you one example from one expert. So neuroscientist Gary Small, brain researcher at the University of California at Los Angeles he writes this, he says:

“Our brains are sensitive to stimuli moment to moment, and if you spend a lot of time with a particular mental experience or stimulus the neural circuits that control that mental experience will strengthen.”

It's kind of like do curls, what happens? The bicep gets stronger. Think about something that stimulated the part of the brain over and over again, and what he's saying is that area strengthens. In contrast he says:

"If we neglect certain experiences the circuits that control those will weaken. If we're not having conversations or looking people in the eye, human contact skills, they will weaken."

So, let me extrapolate for just a minute. Introverts have always felt a little uncomfortable going to hang out with somebody that they've never met before, being around people that they don't know. They've always felt a little uncomfortable with that, and throughout the history of the world, what we've said to introverts that feel that way is the best way for you to get over that is to start forcing yourself into those kinds of situations because over time you will grow more comfortable with that. Now before we understood the brain wiring we were actually giving very good advice to people. Because the neurological framework for the brain, when forced into situations that you don't naturally gravitate toward gives you strength and it strengthens your ability to do that. So young adults who have spent a big chunk of your life, maybe the last 10 years, interacting with people through modern, smart technology, when it feels almost overwhelming to you to go meet somebody that you've never met before or go someplace you've never been before do you know why? Do you know why? It's because when we've reinforced that over and over again with our modern technology it has an affect on us. It changes us.

So let me give you a couple of quick ones. When a 12-year old boy can sit down at a gaming console for four hours straight without needing to go to the bathroom, get a glass of water, or say he's hungry, that 12-year old boy who can't sit for 20 minutes doing any other thing. Is there something going on there? There's got to be something going on there, isn't there? Do you realize how many unexpected God surprises are being thwarted by text messaging? See there was a time when you were sitting at home - I remember this clearly. I'm sitting at home and I know evening has come, dad is watching the Porter Wagner Hour on T.V., so I'm not going to watch that, okay? Like it's not going to happen. Go Wiki The Porter Wagner Hour and you'll see why. And so I know if I sit here very long one of two things are going to happen. Either my dad is going to notice me and he's going to tell me to work on homework, or my mother is going to notice me and she's going to give me chores to do. So if I want to see somebody, go be with my friends, I've got to leave. And so I've got a couple of choices. I can go find a basketball game or something like that to hang out with some guys and play hoops. Or I can go to the malt shop and hope that the good-looking girls ended up at the malt shop. Or I can go to the church youth gathering and hang out there. What happens if I get to the malt

shop and there is nobody that is my friend there? I can either leave or stay and hang out with the people that are there. What if I get to the church youth group and none of my friends are there? I can stay, and you know what? So many friendships and unexpected relational surprises are developed in those moments that never happen anymore because everybody who's young with a smart, text messaging cell phone finds out whether their friends are going to something before they ever go. And they will never go someplace that somebody who's going to make them feel comfortable isn't already there. You talk about promoting clickishness, trying to learn how to meet a stranger, look somebody in the eye, build a relationship. The person that God may have picked out for you to marry you may never meet because you're never going anywhere except with a group of people you feel comfortable with. And so what do we do with all of this; a couple of things.

First of all, let me just say that when it comes to technology we have to create an awareness in our own minds and in the people that make up our family. We've got to come to an understanding and create an awareness of what technology does, and secondly how it it's being used. **Technology: Create Awareness.** What does it do and how is it being used. If you can answer those questions - I'm not suggesting that we go back to the stone age, but I am suggesting that we pay attention to how does this technology affect me, and then how am I using that and how is the rest of my family using that. What are they avoiding? What are they getting themselves into?

Okay, the last one is busyness. We live in a world of options. There's more to do than we could ever do and it's constantly being marketed to us. Options, option, option. And we feel this, like we feel like if I don't have my kids doing this, if I'm not grabbing this, if I'm not going here, if I'm not getting this, all of those things in a consumer society. There's nothing wrong with them being marketed to us. The challenge though is when they come our way it makes us feel like if we don't do it all that somehow we're missing out on life. And so really the antidote to busyness is two things: 1. Priorities. **Busyness: Priorities.** We've got to learn what we consider our priorities. Here's the list of things that are important to us as a person and as a family. What are my priorities? Lay those out. Get buy in. By the way, those of you who have younger children, you've got to realize this is very important, you've got to realize this. The older your kids get the more set they get in establishing their own set of priorities. And so if you wait until your kids are high school age, you're going to have a lot of conflict because you'll have a clash in priorities. Young people start developing your priorities soon, and learn this. Learn the meaning of the word "yes." The meaning of the word "yes" is actually no. You say, what do you mean? Well if I say to my kids, "Hey you can go to that sleepover on Friday night." I just said yes to that, right? I also said no to any

other thing that we could do on Friday night. So we have to learn that every time we say yes to one thing we're saying no to another thing. And there are right things to say yes to, but they should be based on our priorities.

Secondly, we've got to plan. I know that's a dirty word for about 80% in the room, and the other 20% are going like this (demonstrates elbowing the person next to them). **Busyness: Planning** You've got to plan how you're going to use your time. Learn this mystical rule of 24. There are 24 hours in this day, and tomorrow there will be 24 hours, and the next day there will be 24 hours. So you should never get to the end of the day and say, "Where did all of the time go?" Because you know where it's going. And by the way, if you don't have any plans for tomorrow, chances are you may not do tomorrow. What's important to you? Start making plans and planning.

Now some of you may say, "Man this is just really –" Oh, by the way, 2009 I did a series on Margins which works on priorities. I encourage you to go back and listen to that. It will be extremely helpful to you as you try to create good, marginal space in your life.

As we wrap up here today, I've got two things to say to you. First of all, don't give up. It's worth it. Your life is worth it, your family is worth it, don't give up. In fact, really in Galatians 6:9 Paul says this:

"Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up."

Do not give up. Secondly, understand that Jesus Christ's power and presence is with us. Paul said in Philippians 4:13:

"I can do everything through Christ who gives me strength."

Understand this, that Jesus is with us. Let me pray for you.

Father in heaven I just pray for this group of people here. We live in a time when we're being challenged all the time on all of our beliefs and all of our values and all of our priorities. And yet you've called us to be overcomers in the middle of this, and so Father it's my prayer that there would be a spirit of hope from this family series that would settle over people to know that they can, by the power of your Spirit, take control of their personal lives and live them in a way that would be pleasing to you. Father we just have confidence that you did not save us in this world to just watch us flounder and fail. You've got resources and tools and power through your Spirit and through the

External Challenges
Tim Hawks, Lead Pastor
September 1, 2013

presence of Jesus, and may we be overcomers in it. We pray this in Jesus' name, Amen.

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