

The future of work

The pitfalls and possibilities of technology

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WHAT'S INSIDE



"You can't just stop technological progress. Even if one country stops researching artificial intelligence, some other countries will continue to do it. The real question is what you do with the technology"

- Yuval Noah Harari, author Sapiens



The working world continues to change. Many jobs of today didn't exist ten years ago, and may not exist in ten years. New technologies keep emerging - some will disrupt, others will disappear. The future of work is exciting and terrifying.

How does the Christian faith help us respond to these changes? How does it help us avoid the pitfalls of technological progress, and embrace the possibilities for good?

In The Future of Work, we unpack how Christians can model what it means to be fully human in a technological world - for the good of their colleagues and the glory of God.

STUDIES



The wonder of technology
Twisted technology
Humanising work
Going back to the future

HOW TO USE THESE STUDIES



This series has been produced in conjunction with the 2019 Life@Work Breakfast Talks: The Future of Work - The pitfalls and possibilities of technology. It is recommended that the discussion materials are done having first listened to the recordings.

The Wonder of Technology

1

While this study can be used on its own. It is designed to accompany *The Wonder of Technology* talk presented on April 4th, 2019 as part of the series *The Future of Work: The pitfalls and possibilities of technology*.

**Think of examples of early technology in the Bible (good *and* bad).
What are some common things that you find for good examples?**

BIG IDEA

“We are made to make. God’s material creation meets our God-given human creativity in technology.”

From the Bible

Genesis 1:27

So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.

Genesis 2:15

The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it.

Genesis 2:19

Now the LORD God had formed out of the ground all the wild animals and all the birds in the sky. He brought them to the man to see what he would name them; and whatever the man called each living creature, that was its name.

See also: **Genesis 1:27-30**

These two verses express something of what it means to be made in the “image of God” (Gen 1:27) - humans are curating and describing what God first creates.

If people were created to be stewards of God’s creation, what is the place of “technology”?

How can technology *help* us be better stewards? Share examples of this, perhaps even in your own workplaces.

Does this change your approach to technology?

From the Talk

“When we see what technology as part of God’s original intentions for us, that is *true* wonder. Technology is a sign that points up.”

“Superstition versus science is a mistaken way to approach it. Nature versus technology is a false dichotomy. Technology is in the Bible - it’s ancient but not primitive. In fact, God himself, who made nature, uses technology; the Bible says we were ‘made to make!’”

“Our wonder of technology resonates with what we believe. It reflects the God-given hopes that God stamped upon our hearts - for wisdom, relationship and life. A wonder of technology, points to the original source and ultimate fulfilment of that wonder.”

What can you say, or how might you act, to direct your wonder of technology upwards to God?

How might you re-frame some the statements above to start your own conversations with colleagues? (or come up with your own!)

Further Reading

Dyer, John. *From the Garden to the City: the Redeeming and Corrupting Power of Technology*. Kregel Publications, 2011.

Twisted Technology

2

While this study can be used on its own. It is designed to accompany *Twisted Technology* talk presented on June 6th, 2019 as part of the series *The Future of Work: The pitfalls and possibilities of technology*.

What examples do you see in your working day of good technology that has been twisted to harm people?

BIG IDEA

“Only a heart transformed by the Gospel enables us to rule over technology as God intended, rather than it ruling over us”

From the Bible

Genesis 3:1-7

Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, “Did God really say, ‘You must not eat from any tree in the garden’?” The woman said to the serpent, “We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, 3 but God did say, ‘You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.’” “You will not certainly die,” the serpent said to the woman. 5 “For God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.” When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. 7 Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.

1 Peter 3:15a

But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord

Genesis 3 sets in motion a tragic pattern, where God’s original good order for His creation is disordered. Instead of humanity ruling over creation under God, creation rules over humanity after Adam and Eve first reject God’s good rule over them.

What attempts have you seen your colleagues make to try and handle the overwhelm and disorder we all feel (for example mindfulness)?

How might having a new heart enable us to rule over creation as God intended, rather than it ruling over us?

Where do you find technology ruling over you and what practical steps can you take, under God and in His strength, to rule over it instead?

From the Talk

“In short the problem is this – our technology rules over us, rather than we rule over it. We design and build and make these works of wonder, but like in Shelley’s *Frankenstein*, what we make takes on a life of its own and takes over us.

What is the solution to handling twisted technology? It’s daily practicing the order that God in His wisdom always intended, placing all of our making, doing, working under Him, not trying to rule over created things without doing it under His rule. For when we get that order right – Him as Creator Lord speaking into and ruling over all our work – order and peace follows.

In little and big ways, step away from technology and submit all things that you are seeing, doing, making to God. Rather than snapping a photo of it for Instagram. Or crafting a tweet about it. Instead continually give all that He has entrusted us to rule over into His hands, or as the Apostle Peter puts it “In your hearts set apart Christ as Lord”.

How might working under God’s rule, and so ruling over technology as He intended, form part of your witness to your colleagues?

Further Reading

Noble, Alan. *Disruptive Witness: Speaking Truth in a Distracted Age*. IVP Books, 2018.

Thompson, Katherine. *Christ-Centred Mindfulness: Connection to Self and God*. Acorn Press, 2018.

Gillespie, David. *Teen Brain*. Macmillan Australia, 2019.

Haig, Matt. *Notes on a Nervous Planet*. Penguin Books, 2019.