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**THOUGHTS FROM JEREMY**

Technology has many benefits, both personally and for the church. I can connect to people on the other side of the country (or world). I have the ability to keep up with old friends from high school or college. In fact, I know more about some people I have not seen or spoken (verbally) to in 15 years than I did when I saw them daily because of Facebook! In the church I have simultaneously worshipped with brothers and sisters in India, and Africa through skype. The ability to stay connected with missionaries in various countries allows us to give emotional and spiritual support beyond just providing for them financially. Not to mention the benefits that come through the unlimited amounts of resources for study and spiritual growth found on the internet.

Although there are many benefits of technology, there are many downfalls as well. One of the biggest is the disconnect it potentially causes with those we are closest to. Have you ever been in a large group of people and no one is talking to each other because everyone (including myself) is plugged in to some device?

Last week reading stories from my friends in Texas I was reminded of a similar situation when we lived in West Texas. About an inch of ice built up on everything. We lost power in our house and also lost cell service, forcing us to unplug. As the temperature in the house quickly dropped, we (un-excitedly) informed the kids we would have to snuggle up altogether in mom and dad's bed tonight to stay warm. You should have heard the reply from our daughter (4 at the time). High pitched and exited she screamed, "I love snuggling! I'm so excited!"

We spent the next several hours; playing with flashlights, reading 7 books (normally it is only 2), eating a candlelit dinner, visiting with one another, and finally snuggling in bed to drift to sleep. To put it like our 2-year-old we were "just hanging out!" As annoyed as I was at first, it turned out to be the best night we have had in a long time! We really enjoyed each other.

I was also reminded of the need to spend time with our church families. Right after the church was established in the book of Acts, we see them continually spending time together. Not only that, whenever Luke mentions their togetherness, he says God was adding to their numbers (Acts 2:42ff). There is a huge need for the family of God to be together, share meals together, encourage, and enjoy each other.

Though technology connects us to much of the world, it can disconnect us from the people in the same house or church building as us! I am the worst about this. I know this post alone will be used by some to hold me accountable in these matters. No matter how connected we are, through social media, to people in our families and our churches, nothing compares to physically spending (unplugged) time together!

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**Elder’s Corner**

# **What Do You Think?**

**We are all aware that there are many important things happening in our world today that require our attention. Perhaps you have heard of COVID 19. I think that we have all been living with this virus and the daily precautions we must take a lot longer than we ever thought we would. Add to this the recent election controversy, and subsequent impeachment trial, and it is easy to understand why we might start thinking everything is gloom and doom in our world, our nation and even our lives. But is it? There are obviously things in our lives that require our attention, and things that are negative, but we can always choose what we will focus on and how we process the things we focus on.**

**Obviously, the quality of our lives has everything to do with the things we think about because the actions we take in life are the direct result of the thoughts we had first. Mark Twain wrote, “What a wee little part of a person’s life are his acts and his words! His real life is led in his head and is known to none but himself. All day long, the mill of his brain is grinding, and his thoughts, not those other things, are his history.”**

**In Paul’s letter to the Philippian church, he is concluding his encouragement to stand firm in the Lord. There he tells the Philippians the requirements to living a life that God can bless, and he tells them that the result of living a life like that is Godly peace. In Philippians 4:8-9 Paul states, *“Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things. Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.”* Further, Paul states in 2 Corinthians 10:5, that we are to *"demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ."***

**My purpose in writing this message is to remind you, and me, that though there are a lot of negative things happening around us, we do not have to wallow in those thoughts. In the verses referenced above, Paul directs his listeners to think about certain things and to take their thoughts captive. What he is saying there is they are to be intentional in focusing their thoughts away from negative and self-destructive thoughts and onto the things in life that are excellent and praiseworthy. If we will do that consistently, we will reinforce our relationship with God and experience the peace of God, *“which surpasses all understanding”* (Philippians 4:7).**

**Your brother in Christ,**

**Richard Jay**

**THOUGHTS FROM JEREMY (CONTINUED)**

I know this year has been interesting as we have had to think outside the box on how to spend time together and technology has helped us in many ways. However, as we begin to get back to normal and are able to do more, set aside some time to go unplugged and get together with people you love. Turn off the TV, put down your phone and snuggle with your family! In our churches, let us purposefully plan some time just to be together as that becomes more available to us!

Blessings,

Jeremy

**Guest Editorial**

**What Children Remember**

**Conduct your home so children will remember that:**

* **Father and mother were kind to one another (Ephesians 4:32).**
* **Home was a happy place, governed by the law of love (Psalm 119:165).**
* **Each child was treated fairly and required to obey his or her parents (Ephesians 6:1-4).**
* **Sunday was a day of worship (Acts 20:7).**
* **The Bible, God’s law, settled everything (Psalm 33:4).**
* **Home was a place where friendships were dear, but truth was dearer (Proverbs 18:24;23:23).**
* **Although mother and father worked hard, they took time to read the Bible daily and pray (Hebrews 10:22).**

**There is still time for many of us to create good memories for our children.**

**-Unknown**

**Copied from House to House-Heart to Heart**

**Volume 19 Number 6**

TEEN NEWS

In just a few weeks on March 20th, the teens will have their annual Spring ReCharge Retreat. It will look different this year, but I believe it will still provide the escape and recharge that our teens need right now! The theme this year is #FAILUP. We will look at how King David made poor choice after poor choice, trying to cover up sin.  Even when David seemed to escape the penalty for his sin, God still knew about it, and David suffered a great loss.  Even this man considered a man “after God’s own heart” failed and sinned big time, but God still redeems David to be the greatest King of Israel.

Samson was a hero with God-given strength. He performed feats of strength time and again, all to achieve God’s purpose for his life.  However, his strength becomes his pride, and he loses track that God is the source of it all.  Learning from Samson’s failure, we can grow to live a life of worship to God rather than pride in ourselves.

The Story of Jacob has always been a bit troubling.  He deceives his brother Esau into giving up his Birthright and steals the Blessing from his father, Isaac.  But then Jacob goes on to become the father of God’s chosen people.  God changes his name to Israel and gives him 12 sons--the start of the nation of Israel and the 12 tribes.  What brings Jacob back into favor seems to be his seeking forgiveness and restoration with his brother years later. Jesus told Peter he was going to build His Church based on Peter’s ministry, and yet Peter has a serious failure.  Peter denies knowing Jesus three times before Jesus is led to the crucifixion.  But Peter’s failure started when he started drifting from Jesus.  How do we find ourselves drifting from God?

I am so excited for this One Day recharge and cannot wait to experience it with our AWESOME teenagers here at University!