

## "Electronics Ettiquette"

Dear Antwort Mann,

Could you comment on the use of cell phones and other devices that are so much a part of our culture today? Are we so "connected" that we are really becoming "disconnected" from reality?

Signed,

"Party Line"

Dear "Party Line" (and you have to be *really* old, like me, to get the reference,

In my opinion, cell phones, smart phones, iPads and tablets, iPods and MP3 players, etc. are truly gifts from God. I'm serious! What wonderful technology we have to carry entire music libraries, photo galleries and books, including the Bible, on a single, hand-held device. What a tremendous comfort to have a phone with you anywhere you go so that, if your car breaks down, or some other circumstance arises, you can call for help without walking miles to find a phone. These devices have brought many blessings to our daily lives.

But, where God brings us blessings, the devil is always there to corrupt them into curses. It's not the use of these devices that are the problem, but the misuse. Texting while driving; Families all together in one room, **not interacting with each other because** each is on on his or her own device; and and the constant need (dare I say, addiction?) to have these devices with us everywhere, and use them even in inappropriate times, are just a few examples.

Simply put: There are times where we should not be using these things, even if we have them available, if for no other reason than common courtesy to those around us. People in the store don't need to hear us yakking about whatever. Our spouse doesn't need to be disturbed in the middle of the night while we respond to a text someone just sent. Other people don't need to have their lives threatened by drivers not paying attention to the road while talking or texting.

And, especially, when we gather to hear God's Word in church or Bible Class, we don't need to be on our phones, texting our friends, or playing "Angry Birds." Most of us have forgotten to turn them off during church and then, embarrassed, scramble to silence the offending ringtone before the pastor says from the pulpit: "That call better be from Jesus!"

But actually using these devices during church shows a lack of respect for God and for our neighbor. It is a form of idolatry because your call, text or game is more important to you at that moment than is God and His Word. This is where the technology becomes a hindrance to our spiritual and intellectual growth and separates us from the true reality that is in Christ and His incarnation into our flesh to save us from our sins. Whether we are in church, Bible Class, or even Preschool Chapel, we are in God's presence and need to be receiving His communication to us, rather than texts from our friends saying "Wassup? Whatcha doin'?"

As King Solomon writes: "There is a time and a purpose for everything under heaven (Eccl. 3:1)." There is a time to use these devices, and a time to shut the darn things off. Learn when it is appropriate to NOT respond to the incoming text or call. Have consideration for those around you and not just for the one on the other end of the line. At least, have as much interest to hear what God has to say to you as you do when your ringtone announces the latest text or call.

**"Everything should be done in a fitting and orderly way." I Corinthians 14:40**

Best Regards,

Der Antwort Mann