Parenting and Technology

"'Everything is permissible for me,' but not everything is beneficial. 'Everything is permissible for me,' but I will not be mastered by anything."

1 Corinthians 6:12

Smartphones, Tablets, and Christian Parenting

by Russell Moore

I came of age right before the digital revolution. I'm grateful for that because it means I never had to fight against its countless temptations as an adolescent. But sadly, my children's generation, and every generation hereafter, will be forced to contend with powerful temptations I never knew existed.

As I think about this, I am increasingly concerned about Christian families giving their children smartphones and tablets with unrestricted Internet access. We have the data. We know what happens when sexually-forming minds are exposed to pornography. We must not put our children in that sort of peril.

Many parents take an approach to internet access akin to allowing a child to watch television alone or to freely roam the neighborhood. In other words, they assume the danger is limited. But the truth is, allowing your child unrestricted access to the Internet is more like sending your adolescent to a strip-club because you trust him not to look up from his Bible.

We ought to know better than this. By "we" I don't mean that Christians ought to know better. It's worse than that. We as human beings ought to know better. It doesn't take the indwelling Holy Spirit to know that turning a teenager or pre teen loose with unrestricted Internet access is insane.

Jesus described the Fatherhood of God by noting that no one, not even an evil person, would give his son a serpent when he asked for a fish (Matt. 7:10). Why not? It's because natural affection propels a father to seek to protect his child from something harmful.

Don't get me wrong, I think the digital revolution is largely a good thing. I think children should be reared to see technology as a tool to be used for kingdom priorities. But there's far too much at stake to turn a developing psyche loose, with no boundaries, with a technology that could psychically and spiritually cripple him or her. Christian parents must be more vigilant and attentive. Technology is good. Turning our children over to the cyber-wilderness is not.