



## 12 Ways Your Phone Is Changing You

*Tony Reinke , John Piper (Foreword)*

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Do You Control Your Phone—Or Does Your Phone Control You?

Within a few years of its unveiling, the smartphone had become part of us, fully integrated into the daily patterns of our lives. Never offline, always within reach, we now wield in our hands a magic wand of technological power we have only begun to grasp. But it raises new enigmas, too. Never more connected, we seem to be growing more distant. Never more efficient, we have never been more distracted.

Drawing from the insights of numerous thinkers, published studies, and his own research, writer Tony Reinke identifies twelve potent ways our smartphones have changed us—for good and bad. Reinke calls us to cultivate wise thinking and healthy habits in the digital age, encouraging us to maximize the many blessings, to avoid the various pitfalls, and to wisely wield the most powerful gadget of human connection ever unleashed.

## 12 Ways Your Phone Is Changing You Details

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## From Reader Review 12 Ways Your Phone Is Changing You for online ebook

### Hannah says

Although this came recommended by a trusted friend, I still fully expected any Christian book on the topic of smart phone use to be yet another simplistic diatribe or guilt-driven listicle. Much to my grateful surprise, it was neither. Tony Reinke writes a balanced and carefully researched series of points on the ways that this current technology has—or at least easily can—affect us, both for good and for ill. He points out the ways that smart phones have created unprecedented opportunities for connecting with God's people and for delving deeper and more consistently into our reading of Scripture, for example. But he also presents some painful and convicting observations about the ways that our phones can drive a wedge between us and our neighbors and, worse, between us and God.

Reinke is surgically precise in where he aims his blade, seeking to cut out the harmful and destructive phone habits that plague our spiritual, familial, societal, and political lives while simultaneously preserving those elements of phone use that are valuable, edifying, and good. I found this to be a clear, helpful, and evenhanded treatment of a tough subject—one that hits as close to home as our own back pockets. I commend it to you.

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### Calvinist Batman says

(I listened to the audiobook version of this book on my iPhone. An irony that is not lost on me.)

This is a book you will hate. One that you will love. One that you will love to hate. And one that you will hate to love.

Why?

Because this book is a mirror to your heart, and at some point while reading this book, your heart/flesh will hate it. It will scream at you, try to deceive you, try to tell you that no that's not *really* you. He's talking about other people. Or there are reasons you have to be like this. The end justifies your addiction.

Don't believe that voice.

Which is why you'll love this book. Whether your heart likes it or not, your spirit & mind knows it needs someone to give you a self-check in areas like this. So let's talk about the book.

Reinke's writing in this book is in top form. He weaves words like Batman weaves punches. What I loved most about this book is that it shows the problem and gives a biblical solution to it WITHOUT being legalistic. He evens calls out all the technology haters and shows them why they are wrong to hate God's good gifts just because people use them for evil.

This book drips joy from the very first pages. John Piper's foreward is great. Hearing the poll stats/metrics and what that means is heartbreaking. Reinke's sections on FOMO, vices, and loneliness are some of his best. But his chapter on harshness is a must read for everyone who engages on social media, especially for people who like to involve themselves in discernment or watchdog blogs, accounts, or sites.

There were only two things I really missed. The first is that I wished Reinke did the narration for the audiobook. The man they used gets a little monotone and in a number, stat, and technology filled book, we need a more human emotional voice. Not a robotic one.

The second was I wish Reinke had given a more personal narrative at times. There are news stories here and there, but the book lacks a more emotional real-life true-story look at this issue. He gave that look at his TGC17 breakout and I was hopeful it would be in this book, but it wasn't. The book doesn't suffer much from it, but it would have made this book a hard 5 stars for me instead of the 4.5 stars I round up from mentally.

Regardless, this is a book you'll want to read and then read again and then give to a friend. And I can't recommend enough that you do just this.

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## Omar says

The obvious point of this book is to point out that our smartphones are changing us, for better or worse. I thought Reinke had a very balanced approach to the topic as he urges us to, "*avoid both extremes: the utopian optimism of the technophile and the dystopian pessimism of the technophobe.*"

Reinke has obviously done his homework and draws on the research of many others concerning the ways our phones affect us. He quotes Seth Godin as saying "*Social media wasn't invented to make you better, it was invented for you to make the company money. By it you become an employee of the company. You are the product they sell. And they put you in a little hamster wheel and throw treats in now and then. . .*" and then adds the observation that, "*the hamster wheel is also a cogwheel, with its teeth locked into the cogs of other hamster wheels. As long as one hamster runs, all the other wheels begin to turn, obligating all the other hamsters to run too.*"

He brings up some very valid points as he cautions us to think wisely about our use of this constantly-connected technology. As he points out; "*Aimlessly flicking through feeds and images for hours, we feel that we are in control of our devices, when we are really puppets being controlled by a lucrative industry.*"

In the end, he does not conclude that everyone should ditch their smartphones, though that may be best for some, but that all of us must at least be aware of the ways we are being changed by this technology and the inherent dangers it represents.

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## Marcel says

Livro muito interessante e sobre um tema bastante atual: os smartphones estão mudando você! Foi difícil, mas edificante, ouvir cada uma das reflexões do autor acerca de como utilizamos nossos telefones hoje, ainda mais para alguém que usa tanto o celular como eu.

Se você quer fingir que os smartphones não tem parte importante na sua vida e que eles não influenciam seu relacionamento com Deus e com os outros, não leia esse livro. Mas, se você deseja refletir acerca de como tem usado seu celular e quer ser desafiado bíblicamente a utilizar seu smartphone para a glória de Deus, leia. Vale a pena!

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### **Drew Miller says**

In my opinion, this is the most important book released in some time. It is fundamental in helping us see how our smartphones affect us in both the good and the bad. I found Tony's balance to be most helpful in that he presents the facts and his opinions, but leaves the application up to ones leading of the Spirit. The way he contrasts the temporary and the eternal is hands down my favorite part of this book. If you are interested in why social media is so attractive (often addicting), and why you find it so hard to put your phone down, this book is for you. 12 Ways Your Phone Is Changing You clearly belongs in the must read category.

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### **Becky Pliego says**

Thank God that Mr. Tony Reinke wrote this book. Incredibly timely -so don't wait to read it... it could be too late-. Mr. Reinke's book is well researched, Biblical (an arsenal of Bible verses as footnotes support his points), and super well balanced. It will make you think and talk about what you are thinking. It will make you think and pray about what you are reading. It will challenge you to be brave and ask hard and honest questions about your online habits.

When I finished the book I wrote on its last page this, "In a year -and in 2 years and in 10 years- I don't want to ask myself, "What happened? How did my phone changed \*me\* so much? But, "How did I use my phone and social media and technology to advance the Kingdom of God, to love Him and my neighbor more and better, to change the world?"

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### **Sherry Burton says**

This is one of those books that you are not sure you want to read because you are afraid that you might be convicted of something you aren't ready to let go of. This is a most amazing read. It isn't a "get rid of your phone" book at all. Gentle suggestions of "why" and "have you thought about it this way" lead you through to a conclusion that you make yourself. Books like this frustrate me- but in a good way - I read carefully- take notes and mark up as I go and when I finish - I have the urge to start all over to find what I missed the first time. This is a keeper. One to own- and reread.

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### **Ivan says**

This book is convicting and hope-giving, and should be required reading for every Christian today. I read a pre-pub version in January and immediately made changes in my smartphone use.

What I appreciate about Tony Reinke's book is that it doesn't merely provide a checklist of behaviors to change but an entire approach—a worldview—to (re)establish. He wants us to be deliberate, others-minded, and God-honoring in our use of smartphones rather than being used (mastered?) by them.

Not only is Tony well-versed in the latest research (look at the numerous footnotes), he also grounds all he does in the timeless truth of God's revelation. I think it's fair to conceive of this book as a biblical theology of technology.

If you're like me and have often felt guilty about your smartphone (mis)use, then pick this book up. I know it'll serve you well. (Read a pre-pub version in January and a final version after publication.)

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## Mark Jr. says

The best way to summarize this book is probably to let the author do it.

In the last twelve chapters, I have warned against twelve corresponding ways in which smartphones are changing us and undermining our spiritual health:

- Our phones amplify our addiction to distractions (chapter 1), and thereby splinter our perception of our place in time (12).
- Our phones push us to evade the limits of embodiment (2) and thereby cause us to treat one another harshly (11).
- Our phones feed our craving for immediate approval (3) and promise to hedge against our fears of missing out (10).
- Our phones undermine key literary skills (4) and, because of our lack of discipline, make it increasingly difficult for us to identify ultimate meaning (9).
- Our phones offer us a buffet of produced media (5) and tempt us to indulge in visual vices (8).
- Our phones overtake and distort our identity (6) and tempt us toward unhealthy isolation and loneliness (7).

Sounds pretty dire. But Reinke is, at heart, a technophile, not a technophobe; and he doesn't conclude from these dangers that every Christian needs to smash his smartphone. He offers positive practices in place of the negative.

Along the way, I have also attempted to commend twelve life disciplines we need to preserve our spiritual health in this smartphone age:

- We minimize unnecessary distractions in life to hear from God (chapter 1) and to find our place in God's unfolding history (12).
- We embrace our flesh-and-blood embodiment (2) and handle one another with grace and gentleness (11).
- We aim at God's ultimate approval (3) and find that, in Christ, we have no ultimate regrets to fear (10).
- We treasure the gift of literacy (4) and prioritize God's Word (9).
- We listen to God's voice in creation (5) and find a fountain of delight in the unseen Christ (8).
- We treasure Christ to be molded into his image (6) and seek to serve the legitimate needs of our neighbors (7).

A few more thoughts:

One question that really stuck out to me, toward the end of the book: do I deserve to spend time on social media trivialities right now? Sobering.

Another question Reinke pressed on me helpfully is one I have to ask all the time, especially in my line of work as a professional blogger: do I have an unhealthy interest in validation-through-social-shares? That one's tough when your job description involves increasing social shares.

Chapter 11 was really excellent, about slander and "outrage porn."

In an age when anyone with a smart phone can publish dirt on anyone else, we must know that spreading antagonistic messages online with the intent of provoking hostility without any desire for resolution is what the world calls "trolling," and the New Testament calls "slander."

I sometimes wonder how much of our society's public worry (and public kvetching) over the dangers of technology will seem quaint to our great grandchildren—like those who worried around the turn of the 20th century that people wouldn't be able to breathe if cars exceeded 10 miles per hour, because the air would be rushing by too fast. But we're not our grandkids. We're us. I can't shake the feeling that the world really has changed, that the Internet has amplified our fallenness more than it has increased our virtue. The overall tone of Reinke's book is one of gentle warning and instruction, and I think that's perfectly appropriate.

This is definitely my new go-to book for wisdom on the use of consumer technology. (Dyer's *From the Garden to the City* is a good complement to it.)

The reader in the Christian Audio production was smooth and serviceable, though (to be a little too frank?) a little too much like a male version of Siri for my tastes. This book called for reading with a little more feeling, a little more homiletical intensity. But I was able to go triple speed (is that ironic?) and understand perfectly.

I got this book for free for review purposes from Christian Audio, but they attached no strings to my opinions.

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### **Logan says**

This is an incredibly timely and challenging book. I appreciated Tony's approach of, "Hey, I'm a tech user and a Christian too. Let's talk about how the two work together" as opposed to a legalistic anti-tech perspective. That's not to say Tony is pro-tech: there's a few chapters that will make you want to get rid of your smartphone. And that's not necessarily a bad thing.

What's most impressive is how Tony is ultimately pushing the reader to consider Christ and Heaven above all else and ask the question, "How does my tech use lead into the Gospel". All in all, it's a fantastic book that every Christian who engages with technology and social media ought to read.

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### **JonathanT says**

The main premise of the book is that Christians should carefully examine how their smartphones are effecting them. To which I say: AMEN. ABSOLUTELY. I also loved how the author had a well-balanced approach to smartphones and technology. However, I disagreed with a decent portion of this. I'm willing to give it three stars since I'm definitely on board with the main premise, but I wouldn't recommend it to most.

### **Cindy Rollins says**

Excellent conversation on the pros and cons of smart-phones from a Christian point of view. I tend to be a highly suspicious technology geek. I am drawn to the latest technology while also sitting back and worrying about this is changing the world and me. I like how Mr. Reinke made the distinction that some people are called to warn others about technology and some are called to live without it as an example. That doesn't mean we all have to give them up but we do need to let our prophets be prophets.

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### **Carissa Carns says**

changed my perspective a lot. was expecting another book saying to merely get off your electronics, but Tony really delves into the heart issues behind what we do on our phones and how it's changing us even it we dont realize it. 10/10 recommend

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### **Jenny Preston says**

"Self criticism in the digital age is a necessary discipline - an act of courage... Our personal freedom from the misuse of technology is measured by our ability to thoughtfully criticize I and to limit what we expect it to do in our lives. Our bondage to technology is measure by our inability to thoughtfully criticize ourselves. What shall it profit a man if he gains all the latest digital devises and all of the techniques of touch-screen mastery but loses his own soul?" pg 194

In an era of ubiquitous glowing screens, Reinke calls Christians to be thoughtful about the roll of technology in our lives. How does my phone fit into loving God and loving others? I was glad to see it isn't an outright rejection of technology - in fact, he frequently affirms that technology is just a tool, it's all in what we do with it. He also doesn't prescribe one path we should follow regarding our use, encouraging introspection and personal decision making. I'm left with much to think about and many passages I want to revisit as I evaluate my own tech use. I'll never be tech free but this book has convicted me of some habits I have thoughtlessly slipped into.

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### **Alex says**

This book is a must read for any Christian alive in the 21st century. Reinke's writing is fantastic and engaging. Something I truly appreciate is amount of thought and research that went into his writing. This is made apparent by the abundance of notes at the end of each chapter. I also love that Reinke makes it obvious from the start that he isn't anti-smartphone and that he is actually more pro-smartphone. The book covers the many ways that we are inevitably impacted by technology as Christians in a technological age. This book will for sure change the way I interact with my technology in light of my identity in Christ.

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