

Augustinian Loves
&
Smartphone Addiction

I. The Power of Our Tools

Ecology = the study of the interrelationship of organisms and their environments.



With Wolves

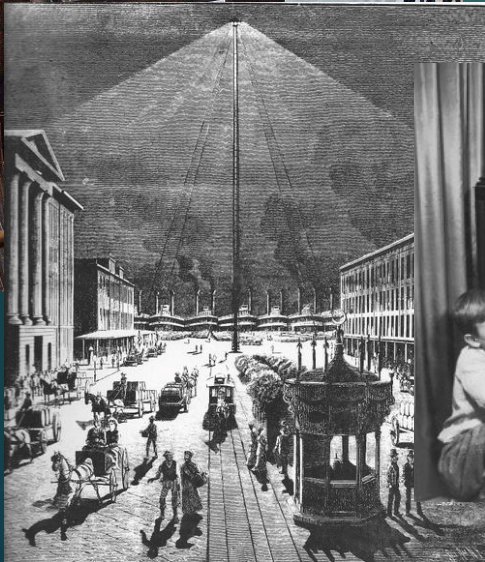
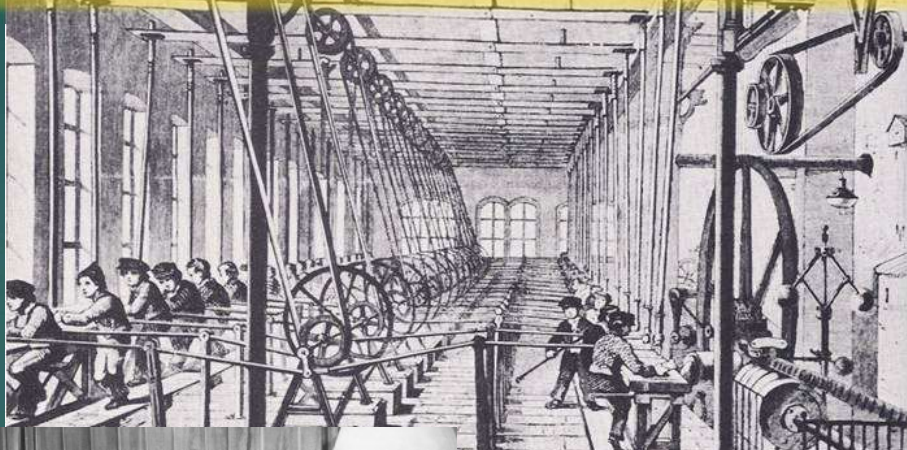


Without Wolves



Tech Ecology?

And the Law of Unintended Consequences



WORLD'S FIRST TAKE-HOME AIR CONDITIONER

...new PHILCO 3/4-hp Bantam 12—smallest room air conditioner made!



Here's the best hot-weather news you've ever heard! Philco brings you an air conditioner so small you can carry it home—yet it's a giant in cooling capacity. Install the 3/4-hp Philco Bantam 12 in only 15 minutes. You can even do it yourself! Then sit back and forget about heat and humidity. There's never been anything like the Bantam 12. It does everything bulky, old-fashioned air conditioners can do. Yet all this comfort and convenience costs less than most ordinary 1/2-hp units. Start being comfortable today! See or telephone your Philco dealer this very minute. Tell him you want a Philco Bantam 12 right away.

TAKE IT HOME TODAY BE COOL TONIGHT!

You can install it yourself. Only four screws are needed to hold the Philco Bantam 12 in place. The unit is so compact that you can carry it home with you. And the best news of all is that you can have it installed in your room in less than an hour. See your Philco dealer today for more details.

Big capacity cooling—3/4 hp. The new Philco Bantam 12 has all the luxury features you find on big air conditioners—8-speed fan, Automatic Temperature Control, adjustable grille.

LOOK AHEAD... and you'll choose PHILCO.
philco-are-go.blogspot.com

We intentionally make tools

What the tool
does *to* us
(not by design)



What the tool
does *for* us
(by design)

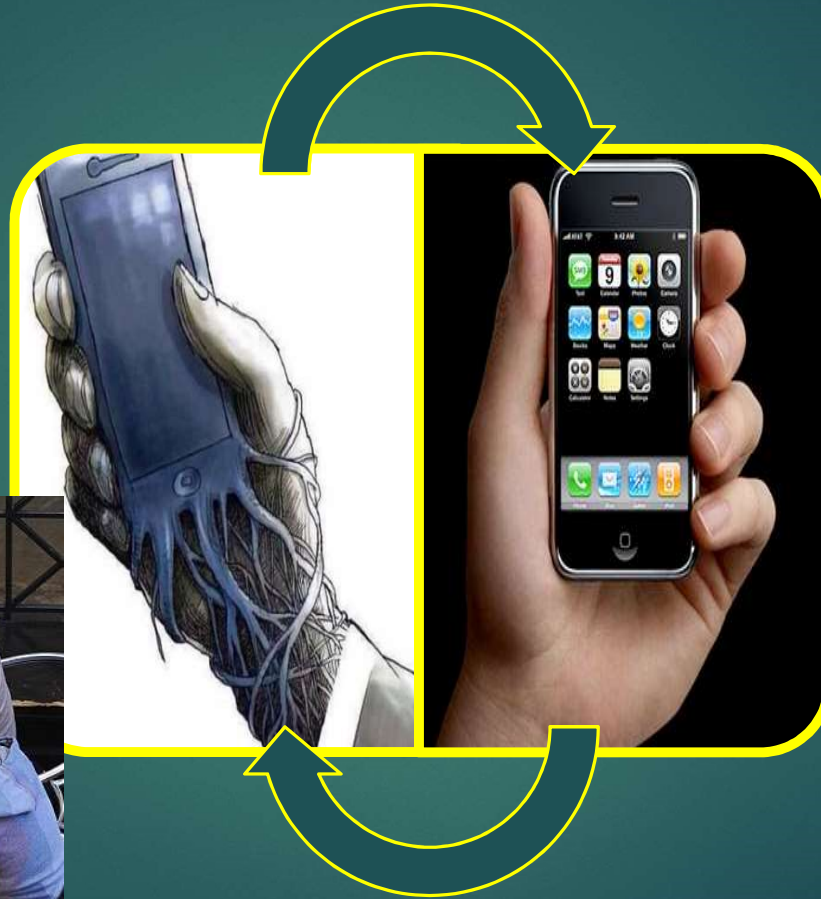
Tools unintentionally make us



“I wake up in cold sweats every so often thinking, what did we bring to the world.” (Tony Fadell, former Senior VP at Apple)



We make tools



Tools makes us



◇ “Digital cocaine”?

- ◇ The dopamine of social media, “likes,” juicy gossip/scandals, video games, You Tube, humor, shocking/illicit imagery, sporting clips, etc.
- ◇ Seems confirmed by brain scans (like gamblers and drug addicts) and by compulsive, violent reactions to “detox.”

◇ A different kind of drug?

- ◇ It’s programmed to evolve and adapt to user.
- ◇ It’s necessary (in some sense); no detoxing allowed?
- ◇ It’s respectable—“C’mon, everyone’s doing it!”
- ◇ “It’s unrespectable not to have it!”



II. To the *Heart* of the Problem

Our We in Bondage to Our Tech or...to Ourselves?

PHYSICAL
Constraints
Wholly external



LEGAL
Constraints
Mostly external,
partly internal



SOCIAL
Constraints
Partly external,
mostly internal



SPIRITUAL
Constraints
Wholly internal



Loves of the Heart as the Root of Behavior

- ◇ “My weight is my love; by it I am carried wheresoever I am carried” (Augustine).
- ◇ For Augustine, “love” is the *motivating orientation of one’s heart* and the ultimate cause of our actions. It’s all that we mean by words like ‘desire,’ ‘care,’ ‘wish,’ ‘want,’ ‘passion,’ ‘instinct,’ ‘drive,’ ‘impulse,’ ‘ambition,’ etc. “Loves” and “hates” are the inward forces of attraction and aversion, impelling us toward objects or repelling us from them.
- ◇ We can describe our loves in terms of:
 - ◇ their **objects** (*what* we love)—the things we pursue, whether possessions, experiences, activities, pleasures, or other persons.
 - ◇ their **degrees** (*how much* we love what we love)—the intensity of our desires for them
 - ◇ their **aims** (*why* we love what we love)—our motives for pursuing them

Ordered Loves v. Disordered Loves

OBJECTS: Loving the right things

Loving the wrong things

DEGREES: Loving in the right amount, to the right degree

Loving in the wrong amount, to the wrong degree (too much or too little)

AIMS: Loving things for the right reason (i.e., seeking from them only what God empowered them to give).

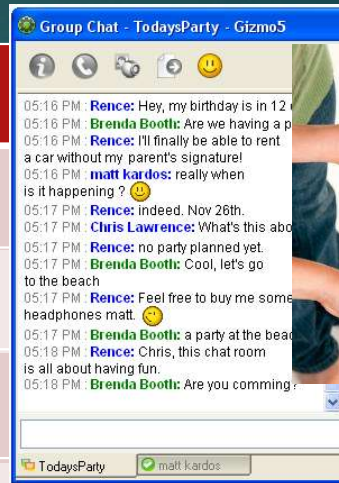
Loving things (even the right things!) for the wrong reasons, seeking from them what they are not designed to give).

- ◇ Our loves are often *disordered*.
- ◇ **Lesson 1:** We should not automatically pursue whatever loves we *happen to have*.
- ◇ **Lesson 2:** We must therefore *discriminate* amongst our loves.
- ◇ **Lesson 3:** Our loves must be *renewed* after the image of God in Christ--Rom 12:1ff

Renewing the **Objects** of Our Loves

- ◇ Relatively few things we love are wrong in themselves, including our children's loves for video games, social media, You Tube entertainment, etc.. BEWARE!
- ◇ But the objects of our loves are not *equally worthy* of being loved; the permissible objects of our love are not equally noble, beneficial, or truly fulfilling.
 - ◇ "Everything is permissible," but not everything is beneficial. "Everything is permissible," but not everything is edifying. 1 Cor 10:23
 - ◇ "Physical training is good, but training for godliness is much better, promising benefits in this life and in the life to come." 1 Tim 4:8
- ◇ *Happiness*—
 - ◇ [1] **subjective** happiness = having whatever one happens to love most
 - ◇ [2] **objective** happiness = loving and having only what one *ought* to love most

PERSONS	PIXELS
1) See face/expressions	• Don't see...
2) Hear voice/inflections	• Don't hear...
3) See body language	• Don't see...
4) Therefore person <u>al</u>	• Depersonalized
5) Clearer meaning	• Unclear > prone to misunderstanding
6) Natural checks and accountability	• Unnatural distance, detachment, anonymity
7) Limited to the occasion; allows for reflection and refreshment	• Non-stop



GOOD



BETTER

Renewing the Degrees of Our Loves

- ◇ Our hearts have more loves than we can satisfy at a given time. In competition for fulfillment, the strongest loves win.
- ◇ Since loves crowd each other out, “too-much-ness” in some areas (video games) often result in “not-enough-ness” in other areas (time with family).
- ◇ Degrees of love are relative to Objects of love:
 - ◇ It’s disordered when our love for inferior goods is stronger than our love for superior goods.
 - ◇ It’s ordered when our love for superior goods is stronger than our love for inferior goods. (Matt 5:6)



Renewing the **Aims** of Our Loves

- ◇ Self-deception: The goodness of what we desire (the Object) can blind us to the badness of our motives for desiring it (the Aims). We're trying to get from these things what we should not seek in the first place.
 - ◇ The workaholic dad
 - ◇ Boys and Xbox Hero
 - ◇ Girls and selfies/likes

Parenting the iGen

Parenting Disordered Loves Starts With...Our Own!

- ◇ We need to identify our own struggles, which kids see with 20/20.



Inward Root or merely Outward Fruit?



Bad fruit from bad tree

“Make a tree good and its fruit will be good, or make a tree bad and its fruit will be bad” (Matt 12:33)



Good fruit from good tree



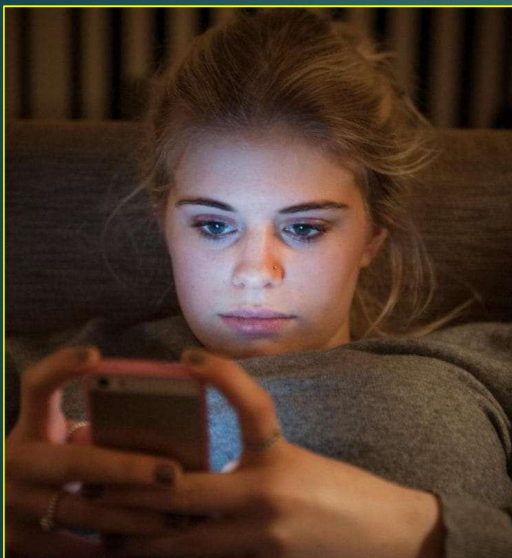
“Good” fruit, bad tree

In the Early Years...

- ◇ Plato (contra Socrates) on training a child's loves before the age of reason (*Republic*, 401b), using music, art, and other good-beautiful models
 - ◇ Strengthen superior loves by feeding them—place them in “healthy fields.”
 - ◇ Weaken inferior loves by starving them—remove them from “bad grass.”
- ◇ Andy Crouch on “shaping space” (*The TechWise Family*, ch.2)
- ◇ “What if I’m starting late?” Displace old loves with new loves (Read “The expulsive power of a new affection” by Thomas Chalmers).

In the Later Years...

Help them to see for themselves the conflict between inferior and superior loves (playing them off on each other). Help them think through the law of unintended consequences.



“Consider what a great forest is set on fire by a small spark. ⁶The tongue also is a fire, a world of evil... It corrupts the whole body, sets the whole course of one’s life on fire, and is itself set on fire by hell.” (James 3:5,6)

Taming the Tongue Thumb

Help Them Understand that the Rules are Guardrails

Smartphones without rules



Thou shall not



Smartphones with rules



Thou shall not



Thou shall

- “So you shall do just as the LORD your God has commanded you; you shall not turn aside to the right or to the left” (Dt 5:32)
- “You shall walk in the way the LORD God commanded...that it may go well with you” (Dt 5:33)

God Has Given Us Authority and the Duty to Use it

- ◇ Barna: “Do you set any limit on the amount of time [your kids] can spend using an electronic device?” (See Crouch, 141)
 - ◇ **Gen X** response—Yes 73% (No 27%)
 - ◇ **Millennial** response—Yes 57% (No 43%)
- ◇ Expect kickback from your children and understand its source in disordered loves
- ◇ But also understand that the more freedom you give to disordered loves, the more disordered they become, and the harder the kickback!
- ◇ Going at alone or in Christian community?