Technology helped

YouTube – useful resources

Podcasts – listen to sermons/topics

Technology hindered

Used media as an alternative to listening to sermons, primarily music

Underlying theme of secular shows/movies directly opposes what the Scriptures teach

Technology impacts all facets of everyday life, which translates into technology affecting one’s spiritual development. This is great because we can use technology to positively impact our spiritual development. But as with anything, technology can also hinder spiritual development.

I have experienced both the benefits and detriments within the relation of technology and spiritual development, and I will address the benefits first. The goal of spiritual development is to grow closer God, and we do that by learning more about Who He is. I am focusing on resources that enable me to learn more about Who God is, and I use YouTube and podcasts as supplements to my Bible and book reading. A major benefit that YouTube provides me is the combination of visual aids with verbal communication. It is consistent with a classroom setting, creating as a learning environment, in that I have a teacher talking and visually communicating information to me. A mere stroke of the keyword allows me to narrow down my topic of choice to one or two keywords and access multiple viewpoints of that information. This reduces my cognitive load and allows me to focus on a specific area of knowledge (Kohler & Dietrich, 2021, p. 1). Since I can focus on a specific area, I am able to learn more about that one thing and furth my spiritual development. The same holds true of podcasts, in that most podcasts I listen to are focused on one topic at a time. My favorite podcast currently is Distilling Theology. Goldman (2018) notes that “Audio learning plays an important role in learning…” (p. 9). I find that I learn the most when something is being explained to me, versus reading for understanding. Therefore, the two audio/visual examples of technology encourage my spiritual development.

While technology has its benefits in spiritual development, it can also distract and deter my spiritual growth. I find that I am most likely to listen to a theological podcast when I am exercising. But sometimes I decide to listen to music instead. There is nothing wrong with doing either, but I often choose music over a podcast because I want to be mentally lazy. Here, I reach a slippery slope of making a habit of laziness over learning, which can creep into all facets of my spiritual growth. The same principle holds for my research done on YouTube. I will start by watching a few videos of my current theological topic, be it impassibility, eschatology, etc., and pretty soon my mind wanders to the myriad of other hobbies I enjoy researching on the video service. All too soon, I find myself forgetting what I had just looked up because I allowed my mind to be distracted by alternative enticing topics. This is because I have negatively trained my mind to think of multiple things as once instead of focusing on the task at hand. Multitasking has its benefits, but when I am trying to grow spiritually, everything else should be blocked out so that my full attention is devoted to knowing my Lord.

Goldman, T. (2018). The Impact of Podcasts in Education. *Santa Clara University Scholar Commons*, *29*(176).

Kohler S and Dietrich TC (2021) Potentials and Limitations of Educational Videos on YouTube for Science Communication. Front. Commun. 6:581302. doi: 10.3389/fcomm.2021.581302