

A composite image of three people's profiles (a woman, a man, and another person) shown in a digital, glitched style. The profiles are layered and overlaid with horizontal lines of various colors (red, blue, green, yellow) and digital noise, suggesting a digital or virtual environment. The background is a light, warm gradient.

GOD AND THE DIGITAL LIFE

*remaining human
in this digital age*

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The Digital Fast

The Digital Fast is a journey to intentionally reduce digital distraction and deliberately increase spiritual devotion.

Reducing digital distraction includes making your smartphone "smarter" by removing distraction apps like social media, games, news, and email. Use your smartphone only for utility apps, such as phone, text, calendar, camera, weather, etc.

The purpose of a digital fast is to disconnect from the constant flow of information and online activities to gain mental, emotional, and spiritual rejuvenation, reduce screentime related stress, and intentionally choose what we focus on.

In the past, some referred to fasting as soul fattening because it is more than just the removal of something, but the intentional feasting on something good for the soul.

By turning down the digital noise, you will experience the time, space and mental clarity to listen to the voice of God.

The Digital Fast

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- 1 Will improve your mental health.
 - 2 Create more space for important relationships.
 - 3 Will improve your focus.
 - 4 Create clarity to hear from God.
 - 5 Is easier to do in community.

How do I put the Digital Fast into practice?

Here are six things to R.E.S.I.S.T. as you seek to regain control of your digital life.

REMOVE distraction apps.

Make your smartphone dumb by removing "distraction apps" and keeping "utility apps". Distraction apps: social media, news, email, games, YouTube/video, Amazon/shopping, web browser, etc. Utility apps: phone, text, calendar, camera, weather, etc.

ELIMINATE notifications.

Turn off notifications from your phone/text.

SEEK God.

Turn down digital distraction and turn up the voice of God. Scroll less, read more. Scroll less, pray more.

INVEST in an alarm clock.

Get your phone out of your bedroom.

SET your phone to look boring.

Make your smartphone less visually appealing by setting it to greyscale.

TEAM up with others.

When we collectively decide to remove our addiction to technology, we no longer experience the "fear of missing out" – instead, we can experience the "joy of missing out."



How do I prepare?

Leading up to the fast, we suggest letting the people in your daily life know you're planning to engage in a digital media fast for 28 days.

Here are some additional steps to consider:

1. Purchase an alarm clock so your phone is not charging in your room or beside your bed, leading to scrolling before sleeping and upon waking.
2. If needed, put an auto-reply on your email account that tells people your work hours and sets an expectation for when they can expect a response.
3. Have a conversation with your work teams and supervisor about your hope to disengage from work/technology during non-working hours.
4. Dialogue with your family about how each person is planning to participate and come up with ways to support and encourage one another.
5. Find a few people who are also fasting and establish a regular check-in rhythm and questions to ask one another regularly.

How do I engage?

As you disentangle from digital devices, consider these ways to purposefully engage in the life right in front of you:

Read through the whole New Testament in 30 days. The “New Thru 30” reading plan is on page 10 to guide you.

Read a novel (or a few!) that you’ve never gotten around to starting.

Play old school board or card games with your family and/or other fasting friends. Host a tournament complete with eliminations and prizes where everyone gets to choose a game to contribute.

Become a walker or runner. Take advantage of living in beautiful Cape Town and go for a run or a walk around the Common or in Newlands Forest. Leave your music and podcasts at home and take in the sights and sounds around you!

Pick up a hobby to do with your hands, like painting or writing. We are made in His image. Let’s create.

If you have small children, get on the floor and play with them as often as possible, being fully engaged in the worlds their little minds create.

Endeavour to only have meals around a table and invite others for conversation.

Take time to just sit and think without an agenda - when last did you do that!? What thoughts and feelings arise? Invite God into that space.

Keep a journal. Keep track of not only how you’re feeling (even negatively) as you disentangle from media but also of all God is doing in you and in the world around you as you notice it more.

What should I expect?

The practice of fasting (of any kind) is in stark contrast to most of the way we live on a day to day basis in our lives, especially as it relates to digital technology. Due to the addictive nature of technology, and specifically smartphones, we want you to be aware of what you may experience during this time.

In terms of withdrawal effects, you may experience nervousness, restlessness, or irritability during the first several days. You may have heightened emotional sensitivity and encounter deep feelings of anger, grief, or sadness, even if you're initially unsure of the cause. Often, our engagement with technology disguises unpleasant feelings and gives us a way to avoid engaging with them.

But the benefits you can expect far outweigh the initial drawbacks. As with any fast, the further you progress, the more distinctly you may be aware of the leading of the Holy Spirit and a realisation of the nearness of God and His work in your heart and life.

Additionally, people report better sleep almost immediately. Other benefits include better posture, noticing the faces and eyes of others, increased mental clarity, the ability to focus intentionally, easing of neck and shoulder tension, an uptick in peace, the ability to dream for the future, and a vibrancy to the physical world.

This experience is an invitation to explore a better way. Rather than asking, "Can I detox/fast for these 28 days?" Instead ask, "What do I want to learn or experience in the next 28 days?" The first question will cause us to focus on simply muscling through and getting to the finish line. With this approach there is the potential to either abandon the pursuit if we stumble along the way or make it to the end without having experienced the benefits. The second question will help us to discover what can be carried forward in our relationship to tech. If we don't have a clear and established "why" behind this pursuit, it will be more difficult to sustain and minimal in its return.

The 4 weeks of the Digital Fast

As a church we will be doing the Digital Fast from 4 May to 31 May 2026. Implement the steps suggested in this guide and then anticipate the following themes to emerge:

Detach | Day 1 – 7

The first week will be the most challenging as you detach from your old habits—expect withdrawal symptoms like restlessness, anxiety, and frequent urges to check your devices (and better sleep)!

Discover | Day 7 – 14

During the second week, withdrawal symptoms ease and you'll start discovering how to make use of the time you've unlocked.

Delight | Day 14 – 21

Your third week is when you turn the corner, as dopamine levels stabilise and new practices become genuinely delightful.

Determine | Day 22 – 28

The final week helps you determine your ongoing relationship with technology and establish sustainable boundaries for the future.

Here are some helpful books that we can suggest:

- The Digital Fast – Darren Whitehead
- The Tech-Wise Family – Andy Crouch
- My Tech-Wise Life – Amy Crouch and Andy Crouch
- Digital Minimalism – Cal Newport
- The Wisdom Pyramid – Brett McCracken
- A Web of Our Own Design – Antón Barba-Kay
- The Anxious Generation – Jonathan Haidt
- Scrolling Ourselves to Death – Brett McCracken and Ivan Messa
- Plugged In – Daniel Strange

30 Day New Testament Reading Plan

DAY 1	Matthew 1-9	DAY 11	Luke 1-9	DAY 21	1 & 2 Timothy
DAY 2	Matthew 10-18	DAY 12	Luke 10-19	DAY 22	Hebrews 1-7
DAY 3	Matthew 19-28	DAY 13	Luke 20-24	DAY 23	Hebrews 8-13
DAY 4	Acts 1-9	DAY 14	1 Corinthians 1-8	DAY 24	Titus, Philemon & James
DAY 5	Acts 10-19	DAY 15	1 Corinthians 9-16	DAY 25	1 & 2 Peter
DAY 6	Acts 20-28	DAY 16	2 Corinthians 1-7	DAY 26	1, 2, 3 John & Jude
DAY 7	Mark 1-9	DAY 17	2 Corinthians 8-13	DAY 27	John 1-10
DAY 8	Mark 10-16	DAY 18	Galatians & Philippians	DAY 28	John 11-21
DAY 9	Romans 1-8	DAY 19	Ephesians & Colossians	DAY 29	Revelation 1-11
DAY 10	Romans 9-16	DAY 20	1 & 2 Thessalonians	DAY 30	Revelation 12-22

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