A 30-DAY CHALLENGE FOR PARENTS

FREE *preview* DAYS 1-3

30 Days to *Wise Media*

and Smartphone Habits

Prioritizing Jesus over media for you and your kids



"Looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith."

Hebrews 12:2

Rachel Lynn Lawrence

DISCIPLE CO.

A LETTER BEFORE YOU START

Let's dethrone the reign *of media*

Hi friend,

My eyes twinge with the familiar ache of strain from staring at my glowing screen again last night. I refuse to look at yesterday's screen time, at the graph that shows just how often I stare at the screen in my hand, head bowed, away from the real world. Away from my children. Away from my life. My mind has settled into the pace of my scroll, the constant stream of new information, however irrelevant it is. My heart finds comfort in posts, in bits of other people's lives, in their opinions and their musings about God.

There has to be another way. There has to be a life beyond what I can reach with my thumbs. There has to be wisdom in using this smartphone, in wielding its power. There has to be a way to glorify God in even this. Especially this.

I'm afraid we're becoming generations that prioritize smartphones over children, over grandchildren, over relationships, over respect, and over genuine Christlike love. So let's dethrone the reign of media in our lives. It's time for Jesus to take His proper place.

This workbook is a 30-day challenge for parents and grandparents, for anyone raising kids in a world of screens. You'll find devotions in Scripture, current research told plainly, practical tools, and prayerful steps for you and your family. My prayer is that you finish these thirty days equipped and encouraged, with a softer heart toward the Lord and a closer bond with your kids.

My prayer for you

That the Holy Spirit would restore the appetite of your mind for God's Word. That your children would see your face turned toward them with delight. And that you would come to know Jesus, not just know about Him, as you behold Him.

With you in the becoming, Rachel



HOW TO USE THIS WORKBOOK

The key is *prayerful implementation*

As the Holy Spirit speaks to your heart, you're going to feel convicted. Conviction comes with a holy distaste for sin that draws you closer to God. It comes with hope, with grace, and with joy, because Jesus provides and strengthens you for another way: His way.

If the Enemy tries to condemn you, you'll feel shame. You'll feel hopeless, as if there's nothing you can do but keep going and hide from God. IF YOU ARE IN CHRIST, THIS IS A LIE! "There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus" (Romans 8:1). If shame-filled thoughts come, pray to the God who sees you. If you read these words with a bent toward legalism, please hear my heart: I want to offer you grace upon grace.

Be gracious to yourself as you build new rhythms. You probably crafted your phone habits over the last five or ten years without meaning to. They won't change in a day, a week, or even a month. But if you commit to prayerfully practicing wise phone use, imagine how different your life could be this time next year. Imagine how different your children's childhood could be, and your relationship with your spouse, your friends, and your God.

Keys to prayerful implementation

- Ask God for wisdom (James 1:5).
- Ask Him to show you your own sinful habits with your phone and lead you to repentance.
- Ask for fresh strength and the Holy Spirit's guidance.
- Remember that slow, steady progress counts.

Do it together

- Invite a friend or your spouse, or start a small group at church. The group guide is at the back.
- Choose an accountability partner and text a weekly check-in.
- If you slip, take it to God and your partner, and start again. There is no condemnation here!

If you don't know Jesus yet

If you're unsure what being "in Christ" means, I would be honored to pray with you and point you to Him. Email me at rachel@discipleco.org and I will personally pray for you.

HOW EACH DAY WORKS

Two pages, *one step a day*

Each day has a teaching page and a respond page. Most days take 15 to 25 minutes. Some days have a worksheet, too.

1. **Read the devotion** and the Scripture passages listed. Some days have long passages and some have short ones. That's on purpose.
2. **Choose a memory verse.** A suggestion is given each day, but notice whether the Holy Spirit highlights a different verse. Write it on a notecard and carry it with you.
3. **Pray the verse in place of scrolling.** When you feel the urge to grab your phone, take out your notecard instead and pray it. It may feel old-fashioned, even archaic (it is!), but it trains your heart to meditate on God's Word in the spaces where your phone used to go. Keep each day's card and add the next one to the stack.
4. **Reflect and write.** Answer the questions honestly. Reading God's Word isn't for checking a box. Linger. Let it soak in.
5. **Do today's challenge** and check it off.
6. **Bring it home** with the "With your kids" ideas for little ones, school-age kids, and tweens and teens. Choose the one that fits.

The shorter path

Every day has a five-minute version for sick kids, night shifts, and newborn weeks. Do that, and you haven't fallen behind. Grace is the ground we stand on, and no workbook can earn it or lose it.

WITH YOUR KIDS · AGES AT A GLANCE

Little ones
Birth to age 5. Your face, your voice, and your presence are the lesson.

School-age
Ages 6 to 11. Explain the why, and let them help make the rules.

Tweens & teens
Go first in honesty. Invite, don't lecture.

THE CHALLENGE

Four daily commitments, *four weekly steps*

Here is the whole challenge on one page. Every day for thirty days, keep the four commitments below. Each week adds one step that builds on the last. Track it all on the next page.

01 Word before phone

Open God's Word, or pray, before you open any app.

02 A verse in my pocket

Carry the day's verse on a notecard. When you reach for your phone without a reason, pray it instead.

03 Eyes up for my people

When someone talks to you, especially your kids, put the phone down and look at them.

04 Phone sleeps outside

Your phone charges outside your bedroom every night. Use an alarm clock.

Weekly steps

WEEK 1

Notice

Track your screen time and pickups every night. Turn off all notifications except people.

WEEK 2

Behold

No phone for the first thirty minutes of the day. Delete or hide one app you reach for without thinking.

WEEK 3

Turn

Phone-free meals and a phone-free hour after school or work. Ten minutes of face time with each child.

WEEK 4

Build

Write a family media covenant and keep one screen Sabbath together.

The grace rules

Missed a day? Do today. Don't try to catch up. Slipped back into scrolling? Confess it, receive His forgiveness, and keep going. The point is a heart turned toward Jesus. A perfect tracker was never the goal.

For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.

GALATIANS 5:1

CHALLENGE TRACKER

Check it off, *one day at a time*

DAY	WORD BEFORE PHONE	VERSE IN POCKET	EYES UP	PHONE SLEPT OUTSIDE	TODAY'S CHALLENGE	SCREEN TIME
WEEK 1 · NOTICE						
Day 01	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	
Day 02	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	
Day 03	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	
Day 04	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	
Day 05	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	
Day 06	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	
Day 07	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	
WEEK 2 · BEHOLD						
Day 08	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	
Day 09	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	
Day 10	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	
Day 11	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	
Day 12	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	
Day 13	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	
Day 14	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	
WEEK 3 · TURN						
Day 15	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	
Day 16	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	
Day 17	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	
Day 18	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	
Day 19	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	
Day 20	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	
Day 21	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	
Day 22	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	
WEEK 4 · BUILD						
Day 23	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	
Day 24	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	
Day 25	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	
Day 26	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	
Day 27	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	
Day 28	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	
GO						
Day 29	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	
Day 30	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	

WHAT THE RESEARCH SAYS · ABOUT US

Our phones are built *to hold us*

I've gathered current, peer-reviewed research here, told plainly. Most of these studies show links, not proof of cause, and researchers still debate some of them. We hold research with humility and let God's Word lead. Full citations are under Sources.

47 sec

Average time people focused on one screen before switching, in studies from 2016 to 2020. In 2003 it was about 2½ minutes.

GLORIA MARK, ATTENTION SPAN, 2023

24 countries

A meta-analysis of studies from 24 countries found that problematic smartphone use has been rising around the world.

OLSON ET AL., COMPUTERS IN HUMAN BEHAVIOR, 2022

3× a day

Adults who checked email only three times a day for a week reported lower daily stress than when they checked freely.

KUSHLEV & DUNN, 2015

3 weeks

College students who limited social media to about 10 minutes per app per day reported less loneliness and depression than a comparison group.

HUNT ET AL., J. OF SOCIAL & CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY, 2018

4 weeks

In a large experiment, adults who deactivated Facebook for four weeks reported small but real gains in well-being and spent more time with family and friends.

ALLCOTT ET AL., AMERICAN ECONOMIC REVIEW, 2020

2 weeks

Adults whose phones blocked mobile internet for two weeks improved in attention, mental health, and well-being, even though many didn't keep the block every day.

CASTELO ET AL., PNAS NEXUS, 2025

Is it an addiction? "Smartphone addiction" isn't a formal diagnosis. The World Health Organization does recognize gaming disorder (ICD-11), marked by impaired control, rising priority, and continuing despite harm, and many researchers study "problematic smartphone use" with the same lens. Psychiatrist Anna Lembke calls the smartphone "the modern-day hypodermic needle." If you see those patterns in yourself or your child, see "When it's more than a habit" at the back.

WHAT THE RESEARCH SAYS · ABOUT OUR KIDS

Our children *notice*

46%

of U.S. teens say a parent is at least sometimes distracted by their phone when they try to talk. Only 31% of parents say the same of themselves.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER, 2024

40 of 55

caregivers eating with young children at fast-food restaurants used a device during the meal. The most absorbed seemed more likely to respond harshly.

RADESKY ET AL., PEDIATRICS, 2014

36 months

At this age, each extra minute of toddler screen time was linked to fewer adult words, child sounds, and back-and-forth turns.

BRUSHE ET AL., JAMA PEDIATRICS, 2024

12 studies

A review found parents' phone use may be linked to less sensitive, less responsive parenting, especially when parents are absorbed in the device.

BRAUNE-KRICKAU ET AL., INFANT MENTAL HEALTH J., 2021

~10%

rise in injuries to children under five as smartphone networks spread across U.S. cities, mostly where kids need a watching adult.

PALSSON, J. OF PUBLIC ECONOMICS, 2017

2×

Kids who used devices at bedtime had about twice the odds of too little sleep. Even having a device in the room was linked to worse sleep.

CARTER ET AL., JAMA PEDIATRICS, 2016

3+ hrs

Teens 12 to 15 who spent more than three hours a day on social media had double the risk of depression and anxiety symptoms, in a study the Surgeon General cited.

U.S. SURGEON GENERAL ADVISORY, 2023

2½ hrs

Average daily screen media for U.S. kids from birth to age eight. Higher screen time at ages 2 and 3 has been linked to slightly lower developmental scores later.

COMMON SENSE CENSUS, 2025 · MADIGAN ET AL., 2019

Technoference, the everyday interruptions phones bring into family life, predicted more acting-out behavior in young children over time, and harder behavior predicted more parental phone use (McDaniel & Radesky, 2018). It runs both ways. That's why grace and fresh starts matter so much.

DAY 2 WORKSHEET · SCREEN-TIME INVENTORY

Where we're *starting*

MY DAILY AVERAGE NOW

Write it big

MY DAILY GOAL

Stretch, with grace

MY DAILY PICKUPS NOW

Times I unlock my phone

MY KIDS' DAILY SCREEN TIME

About how much?

On an iPhone

1. Open Settings › Screen Time.
2. Tap "See All App & Website Activity."
3. Switch to Week. Note your daily average, most-used apps, pickups, and notifications.

On an Android

1. Open Settings › Digital Wellbeing & parental controls.
2. Tap the dashboard chart.
3. Note screen time, unlocks, and notifications for each app.

Do the math: my daily average × 365 = _____ hours a year ÷ 24 = _____ full days.

What do I most want to do with the time I get back?

WEEK ONE · NOTICE

01



Open your eyes *to what is*

This week we look honestly at our habits and invite the Holy Spirit's conviction, without condemnation. We name what the phone has been stealing and why it holds us so tightly.

ANCHOR VERSE

Let us test and examine our ways, and return to the LORD!

LAMENTATIONS 3:40

DAYS 1-2
Inventory

DAYS 3-4
Conviction, no condemnation

DAYS 5-6
What is stolen

DAY 7
Why it's hard

This week's step

Track your screen time and pickups every night. Turn off all notifications except people.

There has to be *another way*

This challenge is for the one who is weary. The one who feels bound to the screen and unlocks it a handful more times this hour without quite knowing why. The one who knows something has to change. It's even for the one who isn't sure it's that big a deal. Everyone does it, right? Isn't this just how life works now?

It's for the parent who sees their own habits showing up in their kids. Maybe your children are spinning, eyes fixed on screens and hearts pulled toward entertainment, and it's hard to ask them to put it down when your phone is in your hand, too. I'm right there with you, friend. I'm parenting in this technology world alongside you, and I need these thirty days as much as anyone.

One of the hardest parts may be sitting still with God's Word, and that isn't your imagination. Psychologist Gloria Mark has spent two decades measuring how long people stay on one screen before switching. In 2003 the average was about two and a half minutes. Between 2016 and 2020 it was about 47 seconds. We have trained our minds on snippets.

Paul told the Corinthians he fed them milk because they weren't ready for solid food (1 Corinthians 3:2). I think our scrolling has done something similar to us. We're so used to snacks and sugar that chewing on meat feels hard! But I am confident of this: the Holy Spirit can restore the appetite of your mind. Ask Him for it today.

> *Make me to know your ways, O LORD; teach me your paths.*
>
> PSALM 25:4

PRAY *Lord, make me to know Your ways. I want to know You, not just know about You. Restore the appetite of my mind for Your Word.*

NOTES FROM TODAY'S READING

READ
Psalm 25 · Revelation 11:15

MEMORY VERSE
Psalm 25:4–5

SHORTER PATH
Read Psalm 25:1–7 and copy verse 4 onto a notecard.

DAY 01 · RESPOND

Why did you pick up this workbook? Tell God honestly what you hope changes.

When do you feel most tethered to your phone? Morning, naptime, the car line, bedtime?

TODAY'S CHALLENGE

Write Psalm 25:4–5 (or a verse the Spirit highlights) on a notecard and carry it today. Every time you reach for your phone without a reason, pray the verse instead.

WITH YOUR KIDS

Little ones

Tell them, "I'm going to put my phone away more so I can look at you." Let them hear you say it.

School-age

Ask, "Do you ever wish I was on my phone less?" Then just listen. No defending.

Teens

Tell them you're starting a 30-day challenge. Invite them to watch you, or to join you.

Let's take an *honest inventory*

Before we change anything, let's look. Most of us built our phone habits slowly, over five or ten or fifteen years, without ever deciding to. You probably never chose to unlock your phone dozens of times a day. It happened one notification at a time.

Today, open Screen Time (iPhone) or Digital Wellbeing (Android) and fill in the inventory page at the front of this workbook. Look at your daily average, your most-used apps, and your pickups, the number of times you unlock your phone. Then do the math. Multiply your daily average by 365. How many full days of your year is that?

Then look at your kids. The 2025 Common Sense Census found that U.S. children from birth to age eight average about two and a half hours of screen media a day. In a 2025 Pew Research survey, about four in ten parents of children under two said their child uses or interacts with a smartphone.

This isn't a test you can fail. The writer of Lamentations sat in the rubble of Jerusalem and called God's people to examine their ways. Examining always leads somewhere. We look honestly so we can come home.

> *Let us test and examine our ways, and return to the LORD!*
>
> LAMENTATIONS 3:40

PRAY *Search me, O God, and know my heart. Show me my habits the way You see them, with truth and with love.*

NOTES FROM TODAY'S READING

READ

Lamentations 3:22–41 · Psalm 139:23–24

MEMORY VERSE

Lamentations 3:40

SHORTER PATH

Write down one number: your daily screen-time average.

DAY 02 · RESPOND

My daily average is _____. That's about _____ hours a week and _____ full days a year. My top three apps are:

Set a goal for these thirty days that stretches you. What could you do with the time you get back?

About how much time do your children spend on screens each day? How does that make you feel?

TODAY'S CHALLENGE

Turn on Screen Time or Digital Wellbeing if it's off. Fill in the inventory page. Tonight, write your screen time and pickups in the Week 1 log.

WITH YOUR KIDS

Little ones

During one meal or play time, count how many times you pick up your phone. Just notice.

School-age

Ask them to guess how many hours a day you spend on your phone. Then show them the real number.

Teens

Compare screen-time numbers, yours first. Go first in honesty.

Holy Spirit, *I give You permission*

The key to these thirty days is prayerful implementation. As the Holy Spirit speaks to your heart, you'll probably feel convicted. Conviction stings. It brings a holy distaste for sin, and it draws you closer to God. Conviction from the Spirit comes with hope, with grace, and with joy, because Jesus provides and strengthens you for another way: His way.

Paul writes about two kinds of sorrow. Worldly grief leads to death. Godly grief "produces a repentance that leads to salvation without regret" (2 Corinthians 7:10). The word for repentance, *metanoia*, means a change of mind that turns your whole self around. Today we ask for the godly kind, the sorrow that turns us toward Jesus.

elenchō

ἐλέγχω · TO BRING INTO THE LIGHT

Jesus said the Spirit would "convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment" (John 16:8). This Greek word means to expose something so it can be seen for what it is. Think of opening the curtains in a room you've gotten used to in the dark. Suddenly you see the dust. That's a mercy! Now you can clean.

PRAY *Holy Spirit, I give You permission to bring Your conviction into my life. Teach me how my media and smartphone use grieves You. Teach me to be wise with my time and with technology. Lead me in righteousness, and open my heart to Your loving correction.*

NOTES FROM TODAY'S READING

READ

John 16:1–15 · 2 Corinthians 7:8–11

MEMORY VERSE

2 Corinthians 7:10

SHORTER PATH

Pray one sentence: "Holy Spirit, show me."

DAY 03 · RESPOND

What has God shown you so far about your media and smartphone use?

How does that make you feel? Write it down, even if it's messy.

Do you see a connection between your media habits and your children's? Where have you modeled this well, and where do you need His help?

TODAY'S CHALLENGE

Pray the prayer on the left out loud with your phone in another room. Then sit for three minutes in silence and listen.

WITH YOUR KIDS

Little ones

Try a "quiet minute" together. Sit close and listen for sounds outside.

School-age

Tell them about a time God showed you something you needed to change, and how He helped you.

Teens

Ask, "Is there anything about my phone use that bugs you?" Thank them for being honest.

KEEP GOING

The full thirty days *are waiting*

You've tasted the first three days. The full workbook walks you and your family through all thirty, with every tool you need.

- Thirty two-page devotions with Scripture, reflection space, and a daily challenge
- "With your kids" ideas for little ones, school-age kids, and teens, every day
- Worksheets: apology guide, media mission, phone clean-up, family covenant, first-phone readiness, Sabbath plan
- Current research told plainly, with full sources
- Weekly check-ins, a 30-day tracker, and a four-week small group guide
- A printable Bible reading bookmark

$6.99 PRINTABLE PDF

Get the full workbook

home.discipleco.org/wise-media

Disciple Co. · Dear Disciple Club

SCAN TO VISIT DISCIPLECO.ORG

© 2026 Lawrence Ministries, LLC · Disciple Co. All rights reserved. Written by Rachel Lynn Lawrence. Free to print for personal and small-group use. Scripture quotations are from the ESV® Bible (The Holy Bible, English Standard Version®), © 2001 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved. Other sources are credited in the text and under Sources.