

## Combating Distraction, Dissatisfaction, and Drama with a Heavenly Perspective

Dan Knudsen, Lower School Principal

In the preface of the 40th anniversary of his classic, [Celebration of Discipline](#), Richard Foster describes how technology, specifically social media, has profoundly changed the world since the first edition of his book was published in 1978. Apps and platforms such as Instagram, X, Snapchat, etc. have had a dramatic effect on our society and culture. To be fair, these can be fun, helpful, and even used to improve communication and friendships. Sadly, however, they often end up causing unexpected and unwanted problems for many high school students that we'll identify as distraction, dissatisfaction, and drama.

The first problem they cause is distraction. The New York Times reported in 2021 that the average screen time for students between 13-18 was eight hours and 39 minutes per day! Some of that is connected to their education, but the reality is that they are spending over half their waking hours in front of a screen!

Secondly, while spending all this time on screens, students are bombarded with pictures and settings of others supposed "real lives" which are often over-the-top, and not an accurate representation of their actual lives. But this is often overlooked, and many students become more and more dissatisfied with their own looks, possessions, lives, etc.

And lastly, people are much more prone to say things on a screen that they wouldn't say to another person's face. All this back-and-forth leads to much drama that may well have been avoided if people would just talk with one another.

So, where does that leave us? While we don't want to do away with technology, we do want to address these pitfalls that technology can cause for high school students.

- **Distractions** keep people from things such as face to face conversations, enjoying the outdoors, reading good books, and even just doing something for another person who cannot repay you. They lose hours each day scrolling through things that they have forgotten ten minutes later! Colossians 4:5b reminds us about "*making the best use of the time.*" Setting a screen "time limit" and even having an accountability partner if students cannot do this alone is a good way to start.
- Much **drama** and many misunderstandings can be avoided by people talking with one another in person, rather than "hiding behind a screen". Being able to hear the inflection in someone's voice, see their body language, and look into their eyes greatly increases the chances for positive communication. James 1:19 tells us to "*be quick to hear and slow to speak*", both of which are best done in face-to-face conversation.
- Spending time in scripture and hearing the voice of God and what He thinks of us is the best way to combat **dissatisfaction**. The old hymn, [Turn Your Eyes Upon Jesus](#) reminds us that as we look into the face of Jesus "*the things of earth will grow strangely dim*". What a great way to combat dissatisfaction, getting a heavenly perspective of all that we have in Jesus!

May we all be people who use our time well, listen before we speak to avoid drama, and always keep our eyes on Jesus!

