

Sunday we tackled the hot topic of Parenting, Children and the “World of Technology.”

It was certainly one that hit home for many of us and standing up to the “Big Goliath” means not planning to overcome IT (the internet, the media, technology... insert whatever IT is) but rather overcoming the negative influences.

As we heard, technology in and of itself isn't bad... it's what we allow it to do to us, to our children and how it influences us that causes the problem. Technology can be very good. It can be used as a teaching tool; used to make life easier and is only going to become more a part of our children's lives. So the goal is to learn how to teach our children to deal with it in a positive, responsible manner.

Dr. Leman shared a myriad of different lists about how to deal with children and the influences we face.

He discussed what to do when you feel your child is ready to enter the cyberspace world.

1. **Be informed.** Know what is out there... keep up with what is going on and stay a step ahead. (I shared that I often “Google” terms that I hear kids talking about just so I can surprise my kids when I talk to them and know their lingo.)
2. **Lay down ground rules** concerning use of electronic devices. Educate kids about the potential landmines. Tell them that there may be things pop up on their screens that will tempt them or that they may even click on, that they didn't intend to and those sites aren't okay to stay on. It's even okay to come tell you when they have inadvertently clicked on something like that – why? Because WHEN you check their “history” later (because you WILL) it will keep them from getting into a situation of doubt and mistrust. Teach them how to block certain things and avoid things they shouldn't be on.
3. **Keep the computer/devices in a common room in the house** until you feel like you can trust the child. Let them know that at anytime you will be on that device. *You will know all passwords* and you will be checking emails, texts and history anytime you wish.
4. **Make sure you are “computer savvy” and that your kids are “computer savvy.”** Help them realize whatever is online may or may not be true. *Never give out passwords.* They don't share photos with strangers or talk to unknown people. Inappropriate chatting or bad language is never okay. They never should give out an address or location. They should be reminded that anything they type or post on the internet is public!

Dr. Leman discussed the media's influence on children. There are so many aspects that capture kid's attention. From video games to television shows, news and music videos, children can see it all without much effort. Kids are taught it's okay to steal, shoot, destroy things, dress improperly, move from relationship to relationship

without second thoughts and use language that hurts and demeans people. Maybe the term “it’s okay to do these things” isn’t the right term, but they certainly learn that the world spins on some of these topics – and people get attention because they do these things. The only way to get tuned in to what is influencing kids from all of these different venues is to know what they are watching; what their friends are watching (because they are hanging out watching it with their friends) and most importantly being willing to have conversations with our children about how those actions affect our world, our city and even our schools.

So what’s the final solution?

It’s not all doom and gloom!!

We can train our kids to have a filter! We can train our kids to beat the Goliath and be ready. Dr. Leman gives these suggestions....

1. **Get your head out of the sand!** Start paying attention to the world and what’s going on. Grow with the technology
2. **Know your kids and know their peers.** Who do they run with? (Invite their friends over so you know what their friends are like and what they talk about.)
3. **Give guidelines, boundaries and expectations.** Let your child know when they choose negative behavior, they are automatically choosing negative, unpleasant consequences. The two run parallel.
4. **You’re going to “inspect” what you “expect.”** If you find violations, then you’re going to “disconnect” the kid and let them “reflect” until you feel it is time to “reconnect.”
5. **Reward when expectations are met!** They need to learn that there are advantages to doing what you expect and they will get greater freedom and independence.
6. **Anchor your kid in the Word of God,** a Christian home, godly values and beliefs and a church family where they can grow alongside other Christians.
7. **Be a parent who sets a proper example for your kids.**

Your kid has the power to use technology in a positive, beneficial way. They need you to guide and direct them to be a positive in a difficult world. Goliath was brought down by a kid. All the kid needed was a little help.