QTC570. Leave The Phone Alone. 08 May 2025

Introduction

Today I'm sharing some initial impressions from a day I spent without my phone. I'm currently in the woods for my normal prayer walk, and I'm using my old MP3 recorder instead of my phone because I left it at home. This wasn't an accident; it was a deliberate choice. I did this yesterday and I've done it again this morning.

I think I got the idea from reading a book about the Sabbath, maybe by my friend Joel Peed. The idea was originally about turning your phone off for a day, which I did yesterday. However, yesterday and again today, I decided to not only turn it off but leave it at home when I went out to pray. I honestly cannot remember the last time I did that.

Now, there's nothing inherently wrong with having my phone with me. I often find it really useful when I'm out praying. Sometimes I might want to look up a scripture to pray through, or find the lyrics of a hymn. Also, when God reveals something to me, I find it very helpful to make a quick voice recording or note in the phone so I don't forget it.

The Experience

However, I must admit, it was with some trepidation that I left the phone on the counter and went out. I felt almost a bit naked, like I'd left something important behind and might regret it. I went out for a long meditative prayer walk, at least an hour, maybe an hour and a half, and thoroughly enjoyed it. It felt strange. I thought I might feel anxious, as someone else suggested I might, but actually, I just felt a bit weird. I found myself thinking, "What am I doing out here? What happens if I think of something?". Although, I did remember to take a pen and paper, and this voice recorder, just not the phone.

Leave the Load Behind

As I was walking and processing this, I realised the key thing that was happening was I wasn't carrying my world with me in a heavy way. The phone carries everything and connects me to everything – events in the world and in my own life. There's nothing bad about that usually, but maybe now and again, I need to set that aside. I mean, Jesus didn't have a smartphone in the wilderness or on the mountain, and most Christians over the last 2,000 years haven't had a device in their pocket, so why is it so significant for me to carry mine constantly?.

A Lighter Spirit

While there are good reasons to carry it, and I suspect I'll continue bringing it most of the time, just yesterday and today without it, I do feel lighter. I feel more like I can connect with everything around me. I'm more free to engage with the sights and sounds. My mind feels a little clearer. I feel there's less of a barrier, or certainly an easier connection, between me and God.

So, my plan now is to do this once a week, maybe more often. To leave my phone behind when I go out to pray. We all love our smartphones, and they are very helpful tools in many ways. But, like anything, they can sometimes get in the way. I'm wondering if they get in the way more than I, or perhaps you, realise.

Conclusion

I'd love to know what your experience is if you've tried this. What effect does it have on your connection or conversation with God when you turn your phone off or leave it behind? If you haven't tried it, why not give it a go? Just remember to do it in a safe way – if you're somewhere unsafe, you might need your phone. But if you can be safe, see what difference it might make not taking your phone. Let me know what you think or what your experience is.

Share your thoughts, insights, or questions with me and the other listeners. And if you haven't yet, grab a free copy of my eBook on spiritual disciplines, *"How God Grows His People,"* at www.malcolmcox.org by signing up for my newsletter.

Take care, and God bless, Malcolm