

Hello! My name is Joey Peeters. I am a senior at Zionsville Community High School. My parents are Ron and Laura Peeters and my brother is named Rob. Also in regular attendance with them is my grandmother Jerrie Heyne. I plan on attending Purdue University next year and studying chemistry. I love playing the French horn in the band, and rock climbing with my friends. Besides that, I absolutely love technology.

Like every other teenager my age, I have my precious cell phone. I have it right here in my pocket and I take it everywhere I go. There are many phones like this, but this one is mine. And God forbid I ever leave my house without it because I will *literally* die. This is very common. It's not just teenagers who are in love with technology. Many of you sitting here have phones or personal devices of your own. Your very own 3 x 5 inch object that can rule your life. It's such a commonality that we will spend most of our day with our noses pressed against these screens. And I know I'm one to talk. If I'm not being kept up to date with what my friends are doing 24/7, I'll go insane. The passage we heard from Philippians talks about the "earthly possessions" and their impact on our daily lives. They distract us from the sky above our heads or from the birds in the trees and they take control of us. But the fact of the matter is, these earthly possessions don't matter at all. One day I'm going to die and my family will pick out a lovely casket and I will go deep in the ground where I will rest forever. And when that day comes, this phone will be devoid of purpose. I'm just using my phone as an example that applies to me, you could have your own object that is precious to you.

"But our citizenship is in heaven" we are told. This is absolutely true. The time we spend on this earth is unable to compare to the time we will spend in heaven. Yet the fact remains that hours of our day are poured into whatever objects that we use throughout the day, whether it be a television, cellphone, or even a bestselling novel. That is because this cellphone, or TV, or book is right now. I could be scrolling through social media right now, and therefore its importance succeeds all else, because that is what I am focused on. Everything that happens in these moments are the most important compared to how else we could be using our time. And it's not necessarily wrong to think this way. It's not specifically our fault. It is just our default setting. We have to make ourselves think in order to appreciate what God has given to us all. We need to take time out of each of our days and just think, "Wow, this is all so magnificent. Thank you, God."

So doesn't it seem prudent to us to alter this default setting to one more focused to Christ our Savior? After all, we will be spending eternity in our perfect bodies in heaven, so of course we should banish these toxic objects from our lives and set our sights to our heavenly existence.

To that I say no. Technology is not just a relaxation method or an escape from reality.

Technology is important to our daily lives in our work and our education. Not every time when you look at someone on their phone are they playing a game. There are other reasons for our use of technology. Admittedly, there are some who devote their lives to their social media, which is unhealthy. But the fact remains that there is no possible way for us to back track from this technological revolution at hand. So what are we to do?

We must acknowledge the life that God has given each and every one of us, and not take a second of it for granted. Christ is all around us at all times, and if we just try to find him, we will. In the air, or in the trees, or in the water. God endlessly supplies us with what we require to survive, so it is up to us to thank him each and every day for what he has given us. There are times that such earthly possessions will detract from our main focus of Christ. And we could be using this time better. Try this. If ever you find yourself on your phone, or reading a novel or watching TV, take a moment to appreciate everything that God has given us. Look around you. See the uniqueness of the world. Maybe even pray. Just so that you aren't wasting your life away with meaningless possessions that only bring temporary happiness. The life which we will be given will never end, and we should anticipate it by looking forward to what Christ has in store for us. I'm confident that all of us could find a point in our day in which we are just passing time, whether we be using our earthly possessions or not. In these times, we are able to look to the heavens and thank God for the eternal life he will give us.

So don't cut your possessions out of your lives. It is certainly useful and is good to take a break from reality now and then. But don't get too greedy. Each and every one of us has our own relationship with Jesus, and we should try our hardest to maintain it. If you are able to pull yourself away from your phones, books or TV's for just 2 minutes, (the same amount of time it takes you to brush your teeth), and whisper a prayer and thank God for what he has given you, then you have separated yourself from your earthly possessions and you have done a fantastic thing. As I am a child of a generation filled with technological advances each day, I strive to not let them take over my life. Sure, you can see me looking at my phone from time to time, but it is my personal goal to not let it get the better of me. Once I break away from my default setting, I am able to take the time to be grateful for all that God has so graciously given me, and my family, and my friends.

In heaven we "will be like his glorious body." Our eternal life will fail to compare to our lives right now. There will be nothing but bliss and we will not have any of the objects that we use today. That's possible because we simply don't need things to be happy. If we all tried to

find happiness from our possessions or wealth, then we would never be truly happy. A persons want for the latest phone or car is insatiable, because it's only a matter of time before it is outdated. We can, however, find true happiness and security in our relationship with Christ. He is always available and always listening. There won't be a moment in your life that Christ isn't by your side. So just take a moment to take it all in and appreciate everything that God has provided, and what he will provide in the future.