It is Written
Philippians 4:6-7

Mike Colaw

Series Reintroduction: We are memorizing key Scriptures.

Sermon Introduction:
Getting and keeping our attention has become an 830 billion dollar industry. Companies are giving more and more money and creative energy to keep your attention. [[1]](#footnote-1)

Listen to this quote.

“*The ultimate goal of all those who seek to earn money from the public is the same: to corner the market on human attention, to capture it, to control it, to own it.*”- Tim Wu, The Attention Merchants [[2]](#footnote-2)

To own your attention is to own… you.

Here is where the critic pushes back and says, “It doesn’t affect me. I can resist it.” Here is the wild thing. You can look at stuff you know you don’t like or even have indirect exposure and it will shape you. Don’t believe me? Let’s look at The Journal of Personality and Social Psychology.

“Repeated exposure to a stimulus leads to increased liking of that stimulus, even when the exposure is incidental and the stimulus is not consciously recognized.” (Mere exposure effect) - Robert Zajonc, Attitudinal Effects of Mere Exposure, Journal of Personality and Social Psychology. [[3]](#footnote-3)

There is a mountain of research trying to work though what this hyper stimulated world is doing to us. Here you go.

The always music, always a show, always a commercial, always a notification, always a sporting event and always news to scroll through world we live in is increasing addictive behavior, decreasing our memory capacity, increasing anxiety, loneliness and depression, and finally shaping our expectations for relationships, body image and happiness to unrealistic levels. Dopamine burnout is here. [[4]](#footnote-4) [[5]](#footnote-5) [[6]](#footnote-6) [[7]](#footnote-7)

Maybe here is a simple way to say it.

Humans are just about to have dopamine burnout.

Lectio:
Philippians 4:6-7 (ESV)

“Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”[[8]](#footnote-8)

Meditatio:

* In Paul’s letter to the Philippians, he offers profound counsel on handling anxiety and experiencing God’s peace.
	+ Historical Context: Philippians is one of Paul’s prison epistles, written during his imprisonment in Rome around 60-62 AD. The church in Philippi was one of the first Christian communities in Europe, known for its generosity and partnership in Paul’s ministry. Paul’s encouragement comes from a place of personal suffering, adding weight to his message of peace and joy despite external circumstances.
	+ Literary Context: This passage is part of Paul’s concluding exhortations in his letter to the Philippians. The preceding verses (Philippians 4:4-5) call for rejoicing and gentleness, setting the stage for this command against anxiety. The passage emphasizes a shift from worry to prayer, highlighting the importance of thanksgiving in one’s communication with God.
* The Greek word for “anxious” (μεριμνάω) suggests a divided, unsettled and busy mind. The term “supplication” (δέησις) emphasizes earnest, heartfelt prayer. The phrase “peace of God” (εἰρήνη τοῦ Θεοῦ) signifies a divine peace that transcends human understanding, a central promise of this passage.
* Notice the direction of events. Anxiety leads to supplication that leads to real peace.

Actio:

Here we are in this digital age. Absolute swimming in noise. I get it. I have felt overwhelmed over the last few weeks to war against the noise in my life.

Illustration:

Just the other day, my phone was buzzing nonstop. I had posted on social media recently and was busy responding to comments. I couldn’t put my phone down. Then, it felt like God gently turned my attention to my three-year-old, who had quietly sat down at the table with me. I hadn’t even noticed her presence. I heard her pacifier, felt her blanket and little arm against mine. In that moment, I felt God whisper to my heart, “What will it take for you to see her? My compass will fix this. A wonderful life is rushing by. Don’t miss it.”

The enemy will do everything possible to drown out the voice of God. You must ruthlessly eliminate noise to make time to be with God.

Philippians 4:6-7 (ESV)

“Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”

Next Steps Cards:

What noise do you need to deal with?

1. Statista. “Global Advertising Spending from 2010 to 2024 (in Billion U.S. Dollars).” Last modified March 2023. Accessed July 30, 2024. https://www.statista.com/statistics/236943/global-advertising-spending/. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Tim Wu, The Attention Merchants: The Epic Scramble to Get Inside Our Heads (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2016), 11. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Robert B. Zajonc, Attitudinal Effects of Mere Exposure, Journal of Personality and Social Psychology 9, no. 2 (1968): 1-27. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Montag, C., & Reuter, M. (2017). Internet Addiction: Neuroscientific Approaches and Therapeutical Implications Including Smartphone Addiction. Springer International Publishing. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Carr, N. (2010). The Shallows: What the Internet Is Doing to Our Brains. New York: W.W. Norton & Company. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Twenge, J. M., Joiner, T. E., Rogers, M. L., & Martin, G. N. (2018). Increases in Depressive Symptoms, Suicide-Related Outcomes, and Suicide Rates Among U.S. Adolescents After 2010 and Links to Increased New Media Screen Time. Clinical Psychological Science, 6(1), 3-17. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Fardouly, J., Diedrichs, P. C., Vartanian, L. R., & Halliwell, E. (2015). Social Comparisons on Social Media: The Impact of Facebook on Young Women’s Body Image Concerns and Mood. Body Image, 13, 38-45. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Crossway Bibles. The Holy Bible, English Standard Version. Wheaton: Crossway Bibles, 2001. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)