**Audio/Visual Addiction**

I did not “Google” or otherwise “look up on the Internet” any statistics to validate or quantify our society’s current addiction to audio/visual inputs. Such seemed at least disingenuous and altogether unnecessary. The evidence is all around us. Televisions, computers, tablets, and “smart” phones are so much a part of our lives that verifying statistics is pointless. Anything, it seems, can be and is “streamed” constantly into us either by audio or visual sources across multiple devices.

* We can’t it seems, perform even the most mundane tasks- cleaning the house or mowing the lawn (or shoveling snow from the driveway), or drive anywhere without some sort of audio/visual stimuli.
* Our phones have replaced our cameras (still and video photography), our radios, our televisions, our computers, and in some cases, our family, friends, and *actual* social contact with the *virtual* world. We even order fast-food with our “device” and have it delivered to minimize interactions with *real* people!
* Husbands and fathers have to be forced away from their “online gaming” or “audio/visual/media man-caves” to spend time with their families.
* Wives and mothers can’t seem to spend what little “me time” they get without a phone strapped to their bicep or ear buds stuck in their ears.
* Some of us can’t even “listen” to a sermon without the visual stimulation of a PowerPoint. Have you noticed how popular “streamed” worship services and “Podcasts” have become? Ask yourself why this is.

**How did we get so “addicted to audio/visual”? Think about it…**

* We put babies in front of a television at home or hand them a phone or tablet to “occupy” them if we’re otherwise busy. Is it any wonder we “old people” have to get an adolescent “kid” to show us how to use our new smart phones?
* At school, children are bombarded with “audio/visual learning.” In some schools, they are even “given” (hah!) a *device-* tablet or laptop, as *standard learning equipment.*
* And how is “after homework is done” or “weekend free” time spent? Hours “on the internet” with social media or video games, ad infinitum.
* After graduation from primary and secondary school, the “real world” job is ever-increasingly more dependent on audio/visual/technology skills.
* A generation will now live their entire lives with the Internet, Wi-Fi, and Cell Service being the most influential factors, or at least having the most input in our lives. Don’t believe me? Spend ONE DAY without a cell phone, television, computer, or tablet and no Internet access- so basically a day with NO (electronic) AUDIO/VISUAL at all.

**“Is Audio/Visual Addiction actually a bad thing?”**

Like a lot of addictions, though the addiction itself has “negative” effects, its *all-consuming* nature becomes a primary problem. What else is being neglected or eliminated to accommodate the addiction’s pervasive aspect?

* **Social and Interpersonal Relationship skills.** More and more people are becoming a “technology person” (or even an “animal person”) rather than a “people person.” Take a look around at other tables at a restaurant. How many tables do see where most if not all of the people seated there are looking down at their phones rather than looking at and talking to one another?
* **Cognitive Listening skills** (just learning or processing information without flashing light images). Some of you are struggling to understand and follow what I’m saying without some visual representation of it. This is likely not so much an impairment, but how you have been trained, or have trained yourself, to “listen” and “learn.” Studies have demonstrated that “listen and write/take notes” actually provides more retention than “listen and see”- which is why many experts are greatly reducing or eliminating entirely the PPT part of a/v presentations, saying that it detracts rather enhancing the concentration/focus on what is heard.
* **The ability to learn or work without entertainment** (not all life’s lessons or work are “fun”). The “learning should be ‘fun’” mindset spawned the notion that work also should be “enjoyable.” This has, in turn, led to a vast shortage of people wiling to actually do hard manual labor jobs (that still must be done). These notions have become so ingrained in our culture that I’m not sure it can be reversed.
* **A/V becomes a “crutch” that negatively influences the development and practice of good teaching skills.** Thoughtful organization and skillful articulation are supplanted by attractive artwork, complicated graphs/charts, and clever “bells and whistles” presentations.

**But this is a “sermon,” not an Anti-A/V seminar. So what does the Bible have to say about A/V Addiction?** More than you might think. **A/V Addiction:**

1. **Turns attention away from family, friends, and brethren.** Parents “surf the web” or become so absorbed in social media or other “gaming” or a/v activities that they don’t have time for, or are not really “present” in, children’s lives and activities, **cf. Luke 1:17**; let alone provide the necessary attention to the needs of brethren, and the activities that create and foster relationships with them, **Rom.12:10-13**.
2. **Focuses attention on *man’s creative power and wonder* rather than *God’s****,* **Acts 14:15-16; Rom.1:20.** Has A/V become our idolatrous *Tower of Babel,* cf. Gen.11:1-9? We are amazed at *the (virtual) world we have created,* but ignore or credit to evolutionary forces *the (real) world God created and sustains!*
3. **Feeds a subsequent addiction for the *new and constantly evolving,* Acts 17:16-21.** Note that Paul first *observed/beheld* their *idolatry,* v.16. He then sought to *reason* with them, v.17; but they were so addicted to the *new,* v.21, that his *words of truth* seemed *strange, outdated,* and thus *irrelative* to them*,* vv.18-20,32a.
4. **Robs us of the time:**
   1. necessary to *quietly* and *reflectively see* and *hear* God, cf. 1Tim.412b,15-16;
   2. to *reverently reflect* onHis wonder, majesty, and Word; Psa.19; 46:10;
   3. to *consider* (*spend contemplative time thinking about*) how we might *encourage one another,* Heb.10:24; and,
   4. to *speak our heart’s desire* to Him in prayer, 1Thess.5:17; cf. Rom.10:1.

**Conclusion:**

**Our televisions, computers, and phones will take over our lives- not in some Orwellian “robots rule the world” kind of way, but through our sub and conscience devotion to them.**

**To this danger we must be neither *blind* nor *short-sighted,* or they will render us both *unfruitful* and *useless* to our family, friends, brethren, and most of all, to our God, cf. 2Pet.2:8-9.**