

Close to Home Study Guide

Dealing with Electronic Addiction

1. Opening (1 minute)*

- How many hours a day do you spend with electronic devices and the Internet?
- How much of that time is truly essential (work or school-related) and how much is pleasure?

We all know how the Internet has revolutionized communications and connections around the world. Its great potential also holds significant harm.

2. Story-telling (8 minutes)

Read or tell Sharon's story.

- Do you know persons who have a similar problem with the Internet?

3. Review of pamphlet (6 minutes)

Electronic addictions represent a new twist on an old problem. Review the key points in "What is electronic addiction?"

- How many warning signs (see sidebar) describe your experience?
- How does Internet use affect you personally? What do you give up in order to spend time on the Internet?

4. Reading of Scripture text (15 minutes)

Our relationships with God and with others are important, and we need to be intentional about doing our part.

Read Luke 2:16-19.

- When, and how often, you do take non-electronic time to pray and reflect on what God is doing in your life?

Read 1 Kings 19:11-18.

- When was the last time you recognized the "still small voice" or "gentle whisper" of God?
- How could preoccupation with the Internet be a form of "bowing the knee to Baal" or giving our life to another god?

Just as with other addictions, Christians have a responsibility to test their own temptations and to humbly help others see turn away from sins that separate us from God's good purposes for our lives. Read Galatians 6:1-5.

- How can we put this into practice?

* The suggested time frames are for a 45-minute session. With more discussion and storytelling, you will need to adjust upward, and possibly extend to a second session.

5. Steps toward healing (14 minutes)

- If you were diagnosed with cancer, what would you do?
- If you suspect that you or someone you know is addicted to the Internet and other electronic media, what will you do?

Invite the group to agree together to take one of the self-tests listed in **For further awareness and help**. Plan a follow up session soon to report your findings and to determine next steps for each person, and how you will support each other going forward.

If someone in the group needs to be a loved one's "keeper" about electronic addiction, discuss possible ways to approach the person (see sidebar, p. 9).

6. Closing (1 minute)

Pray: Dear God, help us to "lay aside every weight and the sin that clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith" (Hebrews 12:1-2). Amen.



This study guide is written by Sharon Williams, editor of *Adult Bible Study* (Faith & Life Resources) and Minister of Worship with Nueva Vida Norristown New Life Mennonite Church, Norristown, Pennsylvania. It is one of a series of free downloadable study guides for the Close to Home pamphlets, which can be ordered from MennoMedia of the Mennonite Church (see www.mpn.net/closetohome) or the Mennonite Brethren Kindred Productions (www.kindredproductions.com/closetohome).