Dear Parents,

 The stats say it all: 90% of children are online by 3rd grade. We live in a digital age. I mean for goodness sake, you are reading this online parenting class while connected to the Internet. The Internet is neutral, neither good or bad. However, there are ‘bad’ people in the world who will use anything they can get their hands on, and the internet is one of those things. Time for some real talk – take a deep breath because this isn’t easy to hear - the average age of exposure to pornography is age 8. Yes, 8! How do we protect our children from the potential negative repercussions of being connected to the world wide web where that industry is rampant? We’re going to tackle this tough subject in the video below - How do we keep our children safe online? You’re the guardian of your child’s heart, and we want to help you keep that pure by putting some boundaries on the use of your child’s mobile devices.

<https://vimeo.com/parentministry/review/118525493/b901c932a4>

 Most of our kids have a level of online proficiency that can is bewildering to us. This electronic prowess can be extremely helpful, but it can be extremely damaging. If we want the hearts of our children to remain pure, we MUST put boundaries around our child’s use of the Internet. Before Paul tells us about the fruits of the Spirit in Galatians 5, he first helps us understand that the Holy Spirit stands in stark contrast to our selfish desires. Paul says in Galatians 5:16-17:“*But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do.*”

 We want our children to be led by God and not by their flesh (selfish desires), so our role is to set boundaries in place that will help them to that end. Here are some tangible ways to begin setting boundaries that will lead children to online safety:

1) All laptops and desktops are to be used in common spaces in the home. They don’t go in upstairs, or in bedrooms. The kitchen or living room is a good place, preferably against a wall so that the computer screen is always visible.

2) Remove search engine (safari, yahoo, google) apps from your child’s mobile device. If they need to look something up, they use a public laptop. Another search engine alternative is m.kiddle.co ; as you would with any other resource, use caution, even with “kid friendly” sites/app, etc.

3) If they delete the history on a device, it gets taken away. Check your child’s history repeatedly (at least once a week) so you know what your child is looking at online.

4) Set restrictions on your child’s device and use a content filter.

There are many ways to set your child up for online success, and this list provides just a few ways to do that. If you need more info or resources, let us know.

Building Young Disciples,

Pastor Sarah