

SMART PHONES OR DUST PLAIN DUMB?

Wow! Here we go with a new year, providing us with a new chance to foul things up, or maybe not. Maybe we will use this new opportunity to commit or recommit our lives to God our Father, so that we stay on His narrow path that leads to life.

Although it actually happened near the end of the old year, I really did a number on myself and poor old Bill, Jan and Debbie. I created confusion and havoc for each of us, and I did it all by myself!

The glass on my marvelous Pixel



4a phone was cracked in several places, and right at the home key on the bottom, the glass had crumbled. In my after-the-fact research on that phone, I discovered that the glass Google used on that and previous phones was particularly vulnerable to cracking and breakage. Oh, goody!

I was anxious to get the glass fixed because my little Pixel phone is of critical importance to my ability to function. It captions incoming phone calls and most video; it uses the app Live Transcribe which allows me to read what people are saying; and it connects to my one ear through the hearing aid so that I can hear phone calls and video. Where to go to fix it?

My internet search led me to Victra, the Verizon store in the Target center in Apple Valley (Hwy 18). I showed them the phone, but they told me that they do not fix cracked glass. However, they would look at the phone to see what help they could give.

They looked up our account, and wouldn't you know it? I could pay off the Pixel 4a for only a little more than it would cost to fix the glass! I'm sure they sensed my interest, as I confess to liking the newest and best, and I was more than ready to accept the idea of replacing my precious 4a with the newer, bigger, better (hahahaha) Pixel 6 at very little cost difference! (Uh huh, Linda.)

That was the moment I went over the falls. I caved to the very pleas-



ant and sensible sales pitch and said Yes. And then of course, they saw on our account that Sir William, Lady Jan, and Debbie had older Samsung phones, and they use 3G which will be obsolete before long, and shouldn't we upgrade their phones, too, because their phones are paid off and we give can them Moto phones for next to nothing.... "Moto?" I asked. "Never heard of it". I think they thought I was from

outer space, but they were on a roll and just kept going. I later saw the boxes that said "Motorola", which now brands itself Moto. By this time I had called home and told the others to come quick, we're getting new phones. It was their day off and they were able to come. We were all standing at the counter, with boxes and packaging everywhere, and more sales pitches for phone cases and protective glass and charging cables, and on and on. I threw up my hands and bought it all.

(Interestingly, Motorola was the very first mobile phone we had 'way back in the Dark Ages, when mobile phones were first invented. My dad thought we should have one so that the store could get in touch with him in an emergency. It was the size of a shoebox and the weight of an elephant, well, probably 7 or 8 lbs. What goes around comes around, from Motorola to Moto(rola)!)!

Not only did we get these new smart phones, at the same time, Android did an "update" to version 14, which you know makes large and small changes, leaving one staring helplessly, trying to remember what to do to get back to the screen you were on just a second ago, or how to close an app and shut off some annoying voice that everyone in the room can hear. Do I swipe right or left, or do I press a soft key, or is this the one with the hard keys in the frame around the screen?? Is the back button the key on the bottom right or bottom left? I know! I place the phone



in my right hand, swing my right arm in one full circle, and let go of the phone when it is pointing to the trash can!! Think you'll get 2 points?

I'm not done yet. Sorry. You were hoping, weren't you? But don't you struggle with this stuff, too, or am I the only one?

At the store, we upgraded ALL of our computers in the building, including the checkout terminals. The desk top computers are all now Windows 10, with Microsoft Office 365, which means the internet has to be working in order for me to type this stuff in a Word document. No longer do we have programs on our computers. It's all "in the cloud!" I keep looking up at the clouds to see if I can see where they keep these programs, but all I see is . . . clouds.

Windows 10 is just enough different from Windows 7 to drive a person absolutely nuts. "Oh, it's not so different," they tell us. Agree. It just looks "prettier." But then how the heck do I save documents? And where do I find my folders for the documents?? How do I know if it will change my original or save it separately? Aargh!



For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of child-

birth until now. And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. For in this hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.

Romans 8:19-25

Have you ever heard of the hottest new thing, the Nottaphone? We have several at our house, and they have been a big help to me personally. Yes, they are what they sound like, not a phone. They are what used to be our phones, which we kept and now can use as mini-tablets. They can do internet, email, games, YouTube, and more, but just not phone calls or texting. I keep my precious Pixel 4a Nottaphone with me to use for transcribing. I'm afraid to use my real phone that way because I might leave it lying around and lose it. Now, if I do forget, it's only my Nottaphone that I left behind. I think that Bill and Jan already pitched their Nottaphones out into the desert as far as Bill could throw it. He HATES this stuff!

And then there's the new Samsung tablet that I suckered for, to replace my old one. Good news! It's much like the old one, but Samsung's "buttons" are different from the Pixel 4a buttons, which are different from the Pixel 6 buttons, which are different from the Moto buttons, which are different from Windows 10 buttons, which is different from anything sane and is absolutely driving me insane! Can't you tell?

Technology has developed around us oh, so helpfully but so completely that it now has us tied up -- or is it tied down? We are be-



holden to it, and within my lifetime, it has become so essential to our ability to function in our jobs and our personal lives that we barely can live without it. Where once telephones sat on a counter in the house, serving the entire household, it now sits in the pocket or purse of each of us. Where once we were free to be unavailable if we were away from that phone, we now must always have a phone on our person to be available at any

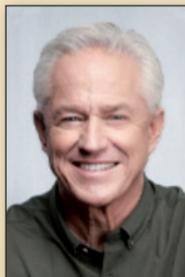


time. Where once we watched TV together in the living room, we now stare at YouTube or Facebook on our phones, in our own little world, oblivious to those around us.

With all this "helpful" stuff, and it IS helpful in many ways, we have allowed it to control us to the point that we have torn the fabric of our society in tiny little pieces, with each one of us floating around in our own little worlds contained in our smart phones, or devices as they now call them.

The Impossible is Possible

Ray Bentley Ministries 12/28/21



"With God nothing will be impossible."
—Luke 1:37

Do you have days when you just don't think you can carry on? Or you are confronted with something seemingly impossible? It's just too hard and overwhelming, or your circumstances seem impossible to get around, through, or over.

You are not alone!

When confronted by the unimaginable, look at how some of our Bible heroes responded:

- Abraham's wife Sarah laughed when the Lord promised her a son in her old age. "Why did Sara laugh...Is anything too hard for the Lord?" the Lord answered (Genesis 18:13).

- Zechariah, a priest in the Temple, asked, "How can I be sure of this?" to Gabriel. "I am Gabriel," the angel answered. "I stand in the presence of God, and I have been sent to speak to you and to tell you this good news" (Luke 1:19, NIV). In other words, God can do this!



SCHOOL NEWS

by Peter Livingston

- LVUSD is headed strong in to 2022! At the annual board reorganization meeting Jessica Risler was named the new LVUSD president and Chelsea LaGrange as Vice President. Jason Hansen was named the Board Clerk and Tom Courtney and Jim Harvey continue as strong board members. Tom Courtney continues to fight with the California School Board Association for rights for Small School Districts and local control and Jim Harvey was recently recognized as "Citizen of the Year" at a Homestead Valley Community Association meeting for the fight against illegal marijuana cultivation amongst other things.
- LVUSD is looking at a plan to pay off all debt in the next 5 years. As two loans become available to pay off the district plans to pay them off. The first will be a loan that was made for HVAC upgrades that will be paid off this year and the other is a C.O.P. loan that was taken out years ago. It can be paid off in 2026 and will be. The February board meeting will have a presentation on the plans for this which will create ongoing money for the district if times go bad.
- Enrollment continues to grow. LVUSD is approaching 1,000 students. Five years ago district enrollment was at 665 students. LVUSD continues to support parental choice for education supporting 6 charter schools and a parent's ability to choose where their children go to school. Upcoming board meetings will be on January 13th and February 10th.

Have these so-called devices become the modern idols in place of the little stone or wood statues that pagan cultures worshipped in ancient times? Are we able to resist the allure of all the interesting stuff they have to offer and keep our relationships with others around us strong and healthy?

If Jesus came up to one of us to talk to us, would we make him wait while we finished this important text or phone call? Would we fail to see Him come up to us because our eyes are glued to that little black slab of technological achievement we hold in our hands?

God, please help us to keep focused on You, not on man's marvels, which can lead us to destruction if we aren't careful how we handle them!

Linda Gimmel

- Mary exclaimed, "How will this be?" when Gabriel brought her great news of the Son she would bear. The angel assured her, "For with God nothing will be impossible" (Luke 1:37).

- The disciples questioned Jesus, and He answered, "With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible" (Matthew 19:26).

- The Lord reminded the prophet Jeremiah, "Behold, I am the Lord, the God of all flesh. Is there anything too hard for Me?" (Jeremiah 32:27).

- "If God is for us, who can be against us?" asks Romans 8:31.
- Praise to "Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us" (Ephesians 3:20).

Finally, when life just seems impossible, we can memorize, believe, and agree with the apostle Paul's conclusion of all his personal struggles: "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me" (Philippians 4:13). Amen

"Darkness comes. In the middle of it, the future looks blank...But with God, nothing is impossible. He has more ropes and ladders and tunnels out of pits than you can conceive. Wait. Pray without ceasing. Hope."—John Piper