

| so you're a youth volunteer now...

A Truth Matters Ministries Resource  
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## tips for the trenches

### **{1} Why We Turned Off Wifi During Youth**

Our church recently stepped into the realm of the future and has upgraded to open access, public wifi. Never before had I seen so many ipods, ipads, cell phones, etc out as we did that first youth night it was available. And so a quick decision was made that during youth the wifi would be shut off.

There are 2 primary issues that I see hitting our youth ministries when it comes to technology use in our ministries today.

#### **1. The relentless pursuit of the latest and greatest.**

I have been guilty of this myself – seeing a kid pull out a new cool gadget and I can't wait to grab it and try it. When my students see my excitement at this new toy, I communicate that "this is the ultimate".

Read 1 Timothy 6:6-10 for some sweet wisdom from Paul as he wrote to Timothy.

Apple and every other company have sold us on this pursuit. "Our stuff is amazing, until our newer, more amazing stuff comes out." Our kids live with this pressure and are often ridiculed when they are rocking their parents' old flip phone rather than the iphone 5.

Read the Parable of the Rich Fool (Luke 12:13-21). The message from Jesus is the same as a message my friend had taped up inside his high school locker "he who dies with the most stuff is still dead".

#### **2. Facetime is not real face time.**

Students are disengaging from real relationships – the ONE thing we have going for us over culture (not sure about this sentence's meaning). How many kids do you see texting, tweeting, checking facebook, etc. during youth? We have taken something great, and are on the verge of making it something ultimate. Remember this scene from Napoleon Dynamite: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ERCzN91JicA>, here in his weird way we have Kip seeing and understanding that he has found something greater than technology. It is not his ultimate any more – Lawfawnda is!

Take it or leave it: (some thoughts to put into practice)

1. What would your youth ministry look like if you powered down your technology for the two hours of youth connection time?
2. Kill the wifi, promote the paperback. Your kids actually need to spend some time unplugged, don't give them the opportunity for distraction.
3. Practice tech blackouts – let kids know you are totally available, but that there will be times that you will not have your gadgets on – and then (the harder part) actually do it.
4. Stop raving about your new gear (on social media and in real life).
5. PHONE your kids. SEND them letters. KNOCK on their door. Help them to see that these mediums of relationship FAR surpass any text message, tweet, or instagram hashtag.