

O the blessing and curse of technology! When it works, it adds to productivity and pleasure. When it stops, there is frustration and, to use a Bible term, “gnashing of teeth.” You have been there, I am sure.

This past week I was reminded of the bane and blessing of technology when my laptop stopped charging. At first, I blamed its maleficence on the charger, but after exchanging several units with little or no results, I had to look elsewhere. What I discovered was that when the cord was placed in a stationary position and a wedge placed under the jack going into the computer, the little blue light indicating charging would flicker on and off. With some additional maneuvering, a prayer and no jiggling, the light would stay on, and after a few hours a full charge would be received.

Eventually, with the help of Tim, my local computer repair man, the problem got sorted. As it turned out, a tiny wire on the inside of the unit was pinched every time the lid was opened and shut. Over time, the copper inside the casing had been severely compromised and was near complete failure.

On the human side of the equation, a gadget on which you have come to rely is near failure, and you realize how dependent you are on it. Panic sets in and adjustments have to be made until the problem can be put right.

One of these adjustments involved my morning ritual of listening to an audio version of the Bible passages prescribed in the lectionary I follow. Since I was afraid of draining the battery, I went back to the old-fashioned method of reading the passages from a printed Bible. I discovered that as good as hearing is reading from a printed text has its advantages. For one thing, it allows you to go back and reflect on phrases and lines you might otherwise have passed over without full understanding or reflection.

Another good thing that came out this experience was I discovered I was wasting a lot of time looking up things and watching videos online. Today's internet is a lot like the encyclopedia in my youth. You pulled out a book to look up one thing, and before getting to that entry, your interest was

piqued by two or three other entries, and you stopped and read them. Without a doubt education was going on, but it didn't get the paper you were working on written. Those printed encyclopedias were filled with distractions.

The same is true of the internet. There is so much interesting information out there that is easy to get waylaid. Being forced to limit the use of my computer for fear I might not get it recharged, actually increased my productivity. I was able to get more quality reading done. More chores around the house and office were accomplished, to say nothing about an increase in quality exchange with people.

Is this experience going to cause me to ditch my computer? No, Paul in 1 Thessalonians 5:21 suggests a better way when he writes, "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good." Those tools we have at our disposal, both old and new, need to be 'proved' . . . used wisely, thoughtfully and at times let go.

But there are other things which are permanent and must be tenaciously held. The chief of which is

the love and care of God. A second is our calling to serve Him in all we think or say or do.

Machines break down, die and are superseded by newer and better models, but God is eternal. Keep your eye on Him, and everything else will come right.

*O MOST loving Father, who willest us to give thanks for all things, to dread nothing but the loss of thee, and to cast all our care on thee, who carest for us; Preserve us from faithless fears and worldly anxieties, and grant that no clouds of this mortal life may hide from us the light of that love which is immortal, and which thou hast manifested unto us in thy Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. (Book of Common Prayer)*

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