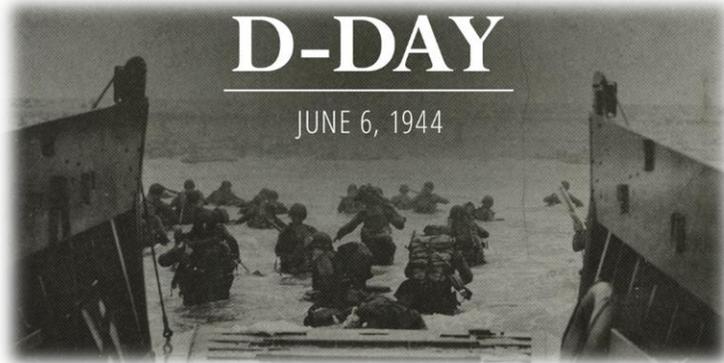


Theological Musings from Dave's Laptop

June 6, 2017

I suppose there are still some of us who were alive on D-Day, though we were probably so young as to have no idea what was going on. The Day that was arguably the Beginning of the End of World War II was 73 years ago *today*.

It has been my privilege to know some of the men who made that landing, some who fought in the Battle of the Bulge, some who were in Patton's 3rd Army, and some who were in "the Band of Brothers," as well as heroes who fought in the deserts of North Africa, on the islands of the Pacific, in Korea's snows and in VietNam's jungles. And I salute them/you today.



And 48 years ago *tonight*, I went on my first date with Jill Martin in Atlanta. We went to see the movie, *Oliver*, and I was so smitten that I drove out of the movie parking lot . . . over the concrete parking block. It was great.

Three weeks later, I left this note on her windshield. And five years later, I did. Thank you, God!

I'm going to marry you one day.

And 30 years ago, we were hosting Anna's 8th birthday party at our house when Jill answered a call from one of the other mom's, who said, "I think I'm in front of your house." Jill responded, "You can't be in front of *my* house, there's no phone in front of my house." And with that, we entered the Age of the Cell Phone.

I never had one, but a good friend had a cell phone back in the day when they were larger than a brick. Do you remember those?



I don't actually remember my first cell phone, but I do remember my first PDA (Personal Digital Assistant, for you young folks). It was a Sharp Zaurus, and I still have it.



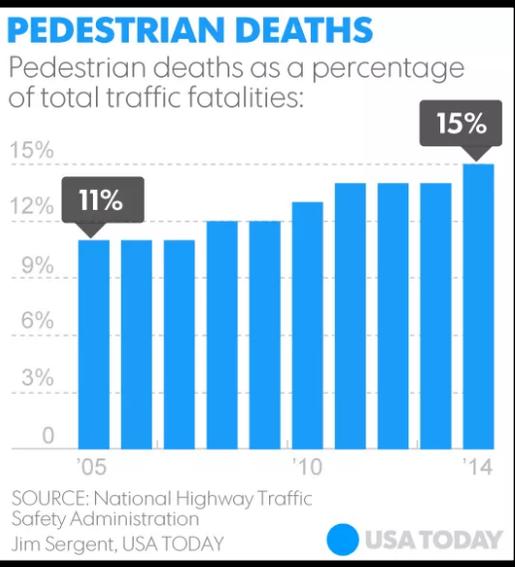
I was very glad indeed to have my calendar and contacts in electronic form, but I yearned for the day when cell phone and PDA would be the same device (a “smartphone”) . . . and then along came the iPhone.

I didn't get an iPhone right away, though I can't imagine why. I think my first one was the iPhone 4. They just keep getting better and better and faster and faster, and iPhone #10 will come out later this year.

Recent statistics indicate that almost every American adult has a cell phone, with more than 75% of us having smartphones. It really does seem to be the case that, whatever the need, “there’s an app

for that”; and it’s not at all uncommon today to see a group of people in close proximity to each other who are not interacting with each other. Rather, every single one of them is looking at a cell phone.

With all this digital convenience and cyber-connection, it sometimes seems



that we’re losing much of our genuine contact with each other. Instead of REAL friends, we have “Facebook friends.”¹ and no longer do we really need to remember much (except passwords) . . . all we have to do, whatever the question, problem, or challenge, is to “Google it.”

One study indicated that **Americans check their phones an average of once every 4.3 minutes, or 85,000 times a year.** Texting and driving makes us more than twenty times more likely to get into an accident. And texting and walking has made pedestrian accidents much more likely as well.

¹ NPR ran a show today asking whether social media will bring about the end of democracy as we know it.

Many studies have wondered whether cell phone emissions lead to more brain cancer;² but have you ever stopped to wonder what effect your cell phone is having on your *spiritual* life? One author recently asked, “**Do Smartphones Give Your Soul Cancer?**”³

What does it *mean* for our spiritual lives that we nearly have anxiety attacks without our phones? What does it mean that we’re so distracted all the time, crave *Facebook* “likes,” lose track of time on social media, and spend less and less time just enjoying other people?

When was the last time (*as in how many minutes ago*) did you interrupt a face-to-face conversation with a real person in order to do something with your phone? How does this affect your prayer life (*that is, your actual conversation with God*)? How does this affect your reading and study of Scripture (or anything else you might read)? **And what responses seem appropriate as you think about these questions?**

I’d really hate to be without my cell phone, but my cell phone is not my master. You might try turning yours off (as in OFF) for an hour and see what stirs within . . . and then pray about that stirring. I’ll try that, too. Maybe, just maybe, if we turn off all our electronic noise, we would hear a Still, Small Voice

Dave

% of U.S. adults who own the following devices

	Any cellphone	Smartphone	Cellphone, but not smartphone
Total	95%	77%	18%
Men	96%	78%	18%
Women	94%	75%	19%
White	94%	77%	17%
Black	94%	72%	23%
Hispanic	98%	75%	23%
Ages 18-29	100%	92%	8%
30-49	99%	88%	11%
50-64	97%	74%	23%
65+	80%	42%	38%

² <https://www.cancer.gov/about-cancer/causes-prevention/risk/radiation/cell-phones-fact-sheet>

³ Jeff Haanen, “Do Smartphones Give Your Soul Cancer?” *Christianity Today*, May 2017, 64. See also, Tony Reinke, *12 Ways Your Phone is Changing You* (Crossway, 2017).