**Book Critique of *The Tech-Wise Family: Everyday Steps for Putting Technology in Its Proper Place* by Andy Crouch**

Erin Olson

CHMN841: Issues and Trends in Next Generation Ministry

November 5, 2022

Crouch, Andy. 2017. *The Tech-Wise Family: Everyday Steps for Putting Technology in Its Proper Place*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books.

**Summary**

Andy Crouch, in his book *The Tech-Wise Family: Everyday Steps for Putting Technology in Its Proper Place*, sets out to help people, especially parents, figure out the proper place for technology in each family and stage of life as it relates to discernment rather than a particular formula (19). Crouch begins with the foundation of why there is an important need to have technology in its proper place. He places a great emphasis on not only the impact on each individual but the impact of technology on the family unit as a whole. Crouch provides the reader with what he calls “Ten Tech-Wise Commitments” (41).

Throughout the majority of the book, he provides detailed explanations of each commitment as well as stories from what his family has done or other people he is close to have done. Crouch’s recurrent theme throughout the book highlights what the reader can do to build wisdom and courage without the distraction of ever-growing and changing technology. His end goal is to help people live as full, flourishing human beings much more in tune with how God created each person to live (40).

**Critique**

Andy Crouch does what many dare never attempt to do, write a book for parents by a parent. How one attempts to claim to have the answers to life’s most challenging task—the task of raising children—is not for the faint of heart. Crouch, however, approaches what he has to offer to the reading world with humility and approachability. He is honest in his approach of not having all of the answers, appears to be grounded as a parent in his biblical worldview, and is authentic with what has or has not worked for his family in terms of the advice he is offering to the reader.

With what could be seen as one of the greatest endorsements of the tech-wise choices he and his wife undertook while raising their children, Crouch’s daughter, a teenager at the time of the writing of the book, wrote the foreword for the book. In the foreword, she states that while her parents’ approach did create havoc and difficulty, it gave her exactly what Crouch wants the reader to experience, the gift of wonder (12-13). One often reads the endorsements not fully knowing whether the endorser has indeed read the book before endorsing it. However, Crouch’s daughter has not only lived through what Crouch is proposing to the reader but appreciated and thrived from it. Her testimonial in the foreword is refreshing especially when some authors give out ideas for better parenting but may or may not be living out what they are selling.

As mentioned, Crouch’s “Ten Tech-Wise Commitments”: choosing character, shaping space, structuring time, waking and sleeping, learning and working, boredom, conversation time, accountability, worship, and showing up for people make up the majority of the book’s content. Each commitment relies heavily upon Crouch’s experience and personal perspective, with some research quoted, including statistics, as well as scripture references and personal stories from friends and acquaintances. Admittedly, Crouch writes from the perspective of having a traditional family model (one dad, one mom, and children), and therefore, his foundation and examples are rooted in the traditional family model role (59-60). However, he recognizes the traditional family unit is a staggering minority these days, and even though his book may sound as if it is only for parents raising children, he reiterates to the reader the impact the Church as a family can also have on individuals (60).

Crouch writes from a deep place of placing great emphasis on the importance of family and how to best nurture, grow, and launch healthy children into this anything-but-healthy and broken world. His “commitments” are what some in the secular world might call “healthy boundaries.” He calls his suggestions “nudges” to help readers begin to understand what is at stake and provides tools to put into place the disciplines which will shape all the other choices one makes (37). Following through and being successful with all his proposed techniques might appear daunting or unattainable to some readers, but again, Crouch is very transparent about what he has and has not done well at the end of each chapter in what he labels, “Crouch Family Reality Check.”

**Evaluation**

Crouch’s writing style appeals to the reader because his approach does not come from a “holier than thou” perspective. Instead, his approach comes from a man in the trenches figuring out how to co-live with technology without sacrificing his family and all those around him. The suggestions Crouch provides as they relate to technology can be useful not just to those who are parenting but also to those who serve children and youth in any manner (for instance, pastors, teachers, and extended family members). The word “technology” may initially be limiting in scope to some readers who might think of technology only in terms of phones, computers, televisions, or video games. However, Crouch touches on other aspects of technology one might not think of as technology. For instance, Crouch refers to technologies such as healthcare, electricity, and downloadable music which only further illustrates the powerful pull of technology impacting an individual’s everyday life.

This resource is a tremendous tool for those who care about raising this generation and the next to understand there is, as Crouch states, “the abundance of the ordinary” (143). This book provides permission for people to experience boredom as a way to appreciate the God-created world all around us. It is also an effective tool to highlight the potential damage technology can cause to those who are not using technology in its proper place. Individuals, by filling time with things that have little to no importance resulting in stunted growth spiritually and physically, cease to create and contribute and instead only self-serve. Crouch states, “This simple nudge, all by itself, is a powerful antidote to consumer culture” (80). Andy Crouch’s book is a great example of this counter-culture lifestyle choice.