

Sign of the Times? Facial-Recognition Software Coming to Stores

I still remember my first crime. I was 6 or 7-years-old and was standing with my mother in the grocery store checkout line. As she paid for our food, I snatched a pack of chewing gum from a nearby rack and buried it in my pocket.

I have not shoplifted since. Apparently, I'm the exception to the rule.

The National Association for Shoplifting Prevention (its existence tells us this is a serious problem) reports that 1 in 11 Americans is a shoplifter. Many become addicted to the rush of getting away with their crime; 57 percent of adult shoplifters say it is hard for them to stop even when they're apprehended.

Enter facial-recognition software, which uses biometrics of known shoplifters from store databases and police logs. Every visitor's face is tracked automatically and compared at 30 frames per second. A match is sent to employees' smartphones. One company says its software has reduced shoplifting by 91 percent.

This is just one way technological innovation is improving our lives.

Apple will soon introduce an iPhone feature that will prevent texting while driving. It will detect that your car is moving or your phone is connected to the vehicle via Bluetooth or cable. Your phone will then withhold notifications for text messages and news updates. This is good news—the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration reports that 3,477 people were killed by distracted driving in 2015. That's nine

people every day.

Counterfeit merchandise is a global industry worth as much as \$461 billion. To fight back, Near Field Communication tags may soon be imbedded in products. Your cell phone would then detect the tag to certify that the merchandise is genuine.

Billboards in Lima, Peru, condense atmospheric humidity to produce drinking water. Now billboards have been developed that convert smog into clean air. One billboard's effectiveness is equivalent to 1,200 trees.

Here's the problem: while technology can improve our circumstances, it cannot improve our character.

Harvard University made headlines this week when it withdrew admission to 10 incoming students who posted extremely offensive Facebook images. According to a Massachusetts prosecutor, a woman sent a text to her troubled boyfriend urging him to take his own life. Later that day, he committed suicide.

Philosopher Etienne Gilson observed, "There still remains only God to protect man against man. Either we will serve him in spirit and in truth, or we shall enslave ourselves ceaselessly, more and more, to the monstrous idol that we have made with our own hands to our own image and likeness."

The psalmist promised, "Delight yourself in the Lord, and He will give you the desires of your heart" (Ps. 37:4). "Delight" translates from a Hebrew word meaning "to value highly." We often take the verse to mean that if we "delight" in God, He will give us whatever we desire. I interpret the text differently: if we value our relationship with God above all others, He will produce in us the desires we should have and then fulfill those desires.

Will you "delight" in your Lord today? {eoa}