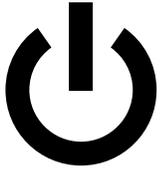


**Power Track Title:** A Theology of Video Games

**Speaker:** Nick Deck

**Key Verses:** Genesis 1:28-30; Exodus 20:1-21; John 16:8; Romans 12:1-13

**Summary:** Gaming satisfies God-given values but is a poor substitute for God.



**Power Up:** Take a moment to prepare

Nick provides a brief history of video games toward the beginning of his talk, including his personal testimony. What games/systems do you play?



**Replay:** Take some time to watch

Note Nick's five, God-given values that underly the appeal of video games (adapted from *Reality is Broken*): **1) Clear goals; 2) Unbreakable laws; 3) Instant feedback; 4) Kingdom-ruling; 5) Voluntary participation.**



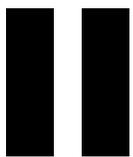
**Comment:** Take some time to talk

**How do the two typical approaches to video games**—condemning OR consuming—**and the questions they raise**—ex. *Do they cause violence? OR How much is too much?*—**fail to address the bigger issues?**

Revisit the five values of video games (listed above) and consider key passages of Scripture (on reverse) that illustrate their God-given design. **How do these values apply to other areas of life (e.g., work, sports)? Which of these values has the greatest attraction to you? What happens if any one of these values becomes all-consuming?**

Nick admits, "I'm not running away from life [when I game]; I want more excitement from life." **Where do you run for more excitement in life?**

Our attitude and words when gaming expose the state of our heart. **What comes out of you when you game? What does God need to change? How has God used gaming as a platform to share His love?**



**Pause:** Take a moment to pray

Thank God for wiring us to play, rule, and connect. Thank God for His Spirit that convicts and affirms us. Ask God to give us discipline and discernment to think through a theology of gaming that brings greatest glory to Him.



**Take Action:** Take a step forward

To test the intensity of your gaming habit, consider taking a short break or setting a temporary limit on the amount of time you play. Use that time to explore nature, exercise, or read Tom Julien's book, *The Three Princes*.

## Bonus Features | Additional Notes and Quotes from Nick Deck

**Power Track Summary:** Video games are a wonderful part of living in the modern era. They are so wonderful they can dominate every aspect of our lives, but have we ever considered why we love to play? Can we use video games to glorify God? This Power Track looks at what it means to develop our own theology of video games.

**About Nick Deck:** Youth Pastor at Winona Lake GBC, husband to Athena, Mario 3 champ. Access slides from his talk are on [PREZI](#).

**Summarizing the History of Games:** “We’ve gone from controlling a dot on a screen to putting on a headset to immerse ourselves in virtual worlds.”

### Fast Facts (from Entertainment Software Association – July 2018)

- \$36 billion industry.
- Half a billion people play daily; average gamer (13 hr/wk) is 34-years old.
- 60% of US plays daily; 45% of gamers are women; 25% of gamers are over 50

### Common Questions from Parents and Students about Gaming:

- Do video games make people less smart or focused? More violent? Less social?
- What is a reasonable limit for how long to play each day? Week?
- Is playing games with violence, sexuality, or theft bad?
- If I sin in a video game am I culpable in real life?

### Questions for Self-Reflection about Personal Gaming Habits:

- Why are you playing this game? Arousal? Violence. Escapism?
- What are you hiding from others (friends, parents, youth pastor) in your gaming?
- How does your attitude and actions in gaming reflect your love for God?
- How do you know or use your gaming to bring glory to God?
- How appropriate is this game’s content? How appropriate is talk with other gamers?
- How do I use gaming to meet needs God intends to meet himself? Is He my Most?
- What fills my mind when I play video games?

### Key Verses for God-given Values of Video Games

1. **Clear goals:** Matthew 5:13-16; Romans 12:1-5; 2 Corinthians 5:18-20
2. **Unbreakable laws:** Exodus 20:1-21; Matthew 22:36-28; Proverbs 13:24
3. **Instant feedback** – John 16:8; Galatians 5:16; James 1:22-25
4. **Kingdom-ruling:** Genesis 1:28-30; Matthew 25:34; Revelation 22:5
5. **Voluntary participation:** Genesis 2:18; Hebrews 10:24-25; Romans 12:3-13

“We so easily set up idols in our lives. One of the best ways to test those idols is by taking stock of how much time we think of things... If there are no boundaries on your gaming, something is wrong. You are living in sin. You have a problem with idols... Sometimes I wonder if video games are just a gateway for Satan to see what is going on inside our hearts.”