

CREW Bible Study

Youth XP3 Message Series – LIKE ME – Week 1

- **BOTTOM LINE:** Don't compare *your* worth with *their* posts.
- **GOAL:** To help students understand that comparison is unfair because we tend to compare our entire lives to the small window of other's lives that we see on social media or what they show in public.
- **SCRIPTURE:**
 - *We do not dare to classify or compare ourselves with some who commend themselves. When they measure themselves by themselves and compare themselves with themselves, they are not wise. – 2 Corinthians 10:12*
 - *Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it. – Proverbs 4:23*

MESSAGE

Here's a question for you: How often do you compare yourself to someone else? Where would you rate that on a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being hardly ever and 10 being.....daily?

Think of that number and then think of this: How often do you compare yourself to someone else when you scroll through social media? Does that make your number go up? Many of us might be feeling fairly good about ourselves, decently happy with how things are going, until we scroll social media and see something that totally deflates us, like.....

- How amazing she looks in everything she wears *and* she has perfect skin.
- His family is so nice and they all get along so well. They're always doing fun stuff together.
- She has so many friends.
- He is awesome at every sport he plays and his parents just bought him a new car.

You know what I mean? Scrolling social media can make us go from feeling good about life to feeling like life isn't great at all in about ten seconds. Relatable?

We look at what other people put online, and then match it up to what we know is true about our current reality. And when we do that, three things happen:

1. Their life looks better.
2. THEY look better.
3. You believe their life is definitely WAY better than your life.

That's what comparison does. But here's the tricky thing about comparing your life to someone else's life: you don't know the whole picture.

We know that when it comes to our *own* life, we live the good, the bad, the happy, and the sad. That's reality. And we know that places like social media are designed to display just the highlights of life. That's typically just the good stuff. You are probably not going to post about the fight you just had with your boyfriend, best friend, or your mom. But you will be sure to post that fabulous photo you just took. Or maybe you took 30 of them just to make sure you had the right lighting and angle. Or you'll rewrite the same funny comment 30 times to make sure it really is actually funny. Right?

We've all been there in some way – trying to project the life we want others to think we have. We create posts to show how pretty, funny or accomplished we are even if it doesn't match the life we actually have. And here's what's crazy about that - we forget that everybody else is doing and thinking the *same* thing. They're projecting their best life, not their real life too. But sometimes our brains trick us into believing that their highlights on social media are the whole story.

Even before social media, comparison was an issue. It was even an issue and a temptation for the early followers of Jesus. One of the greatest teachers and followers of Jesus that ever lived was Paul. He made it his mission in life to make sure that everyone he met knew how their lives could be better by following Jesus. When Paul wasn't with the people, he wrote letters to them to encourage them and stay connected with them. And sometimes he was pretty direct in calling them out when they needed it. Listen to what Paul says to the people of Corinth in 2 Corinthians, chapter 10, verse 12:

We do not dare to classify or compare ourselves with some who commend themselves. When they measure themselves by themselves and compare themselves with themselves, they are not wise.

Paul is saying that it's unwise to let your behavior and life be based on a comparison to someone else's behavior or life. He even says "do not dare" do this. Just stay away from it. Paul says it's ridiculous to spend time figuring out how you measure up to people. He wanted to be sure the early followers of Jesus knew this, and it's just as important for us to hear today.

Here's some good truth to remember: There will always be people who have more than you, and there will always be people who have less. Don't focus on people who have less in order to feel better about yourself. And don't focus on the people who have more either. It's best not to compare at all, because it's a game you will never win.

This is obviously not easy to do, but there's a principle found in the book of Proverbs that can help us. Hear these words from Proverbs, chapter 4, verse 23:

Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it.

This was written by King Solomon who was known for being incredibly wise. He was passionate about how important it is to guard our hearts, because what we *do*

almost always comes from what we *believe* in our hearts. We need to guard what our heart feels so that we can be sure that good things will come out of it.

One of the quickest ways to destroy our hearts is comparison. If you see a post about how great someone else's life is and you allow it to get to your heart, to mess with what you believe about yourself, it makes you feel less-than or worthless. And what comes out of that?

- It can make you overachieve. Maybe seeing everyone else's perfect life lights a fire under you and you start working really hard to keep up with what other people are doing and projecting in hopes of getting the same results and the same likes.
- It can make you play the posts over and over in your mind. Jealously motivates you to get out there and make your posts look even better. You find yourself uber-focused on the image you project.

Comparison can attack our hearts and mess with our lives, so how can we – how can you – fight the temptation to allow comparison to rule your life?

It may not be easy, but it starts with that word that King Solomon used: *guard*. Set some boundaries for what you see and what you allow into your heart. If something messes with you, destroys how you feel, or gets to your heart in a bad way, pay attention to that and step in to give yourself a break. Try this:

- Guard your Instagram, your Snapchat, your TikTok, your YouTube views, and whatever else is in your feed.
- Guard your thoughts when you are watching the likes get posted (or not posted.)
- Guard your heart when you read the comments to your posts.
- Guard your heart when you make comments on other posts.
- Guard who you follow and who you allow to follow you.
- Guard yourself when you interact with others who make your life feel less.
- Guard who you spend time with who constantly brags about their life or who constantly complains about their life.

It comes down to this: When you find yourself in a situation – whether it's on social media or in real life – whenever you are more likely to compare yourself to others, be on guard. Pay attention. If something is trying to get to your heart, set a boundary there. Don't compare your worth with someone else's posts. Guard your heart. Because everything else flows from it.

FAMILY DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. What are your favorite social media accounts to follow? Why do you follow them?
2. What's one area where you tend to compare your life to other people's lives?
3. We all have expectations about who we are "supposed to be." Is there an area of your life where you are disappointed in who you are?
4. On a scale of 1 to 10, how frequently do you compare yourself to others in these areas:
 - a. Appearance
 - b. Grades
 - c. Skill level
 - d. Accomplishments
 - e. Activities/ Social life
5. This past year we have all probably spent more time on social media than ever before because of coronavirus isolation. Did you notice it affecting how you saw yourself? Did you notice it affecting your mood?
6. What's the difference between comparing yourself to someone and looking up to someone as a role model?
7. We all know that no one's social media feed is a perfect reflection of the reality of their life. If we know that, why do you think other people's posts still affect us the way they do?
8. Do you spend time with someone who constantly brags about their life or who constantly complains about their life? How does spending time with them affect your mood?
9. Read Proverbs 4:23. Why do you think it matters that you guard your heart?
10. What is one area of your life that you need to guard your heart better?