

CREW Bible Study

Youth XP3 Message Series – LIKE ME – Week 3

- **BOTTOM LINE:** I can like me because God loves me.
- **GOAL:** To help students understand they were uniquely created by God and they are enough exactly as they are.
- **SCRIPTURE:**
 - *Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect. – Romans 12:2*
 - *In his grace, God has given us different gifts for doing certain things well. So, if God has given you the ability to prophesy, speak out with as much faith as God has given you. – Romans 12:6*

MESSAGE

I want to share a word with you. The word is, "enough."

How much is *enough*? How about ice cream? How much is enough for you when it comes to ice cream? A single scoop? Or the whole pint?

How about Netflix? How much Netflix is enough for you for one day? One episode? Two or three? Or an entire season?

Or what about exercise? How much is enough for you when it comes to working out? A walk around the block? Or a run for several miles?

How about this one – how much is enough when it comes to being liked? Because so often we find ourselves thinking that we're not *enough* to be liked enough - not smart enough, talented enough, good-looking enough, funny enough or responsible enough to be liked enough. Whether it's your social media "friends", or people like your coach or a teacher, or your own real-life friends and family.

Think about this for a minute. For many aspects of your life, there's probably a certain level of success that you think will be *enough*. It's a standard you have in your head that you think you need to reach for your friends, your parents, your teacher, your coach, the music director, whoever to approve of you. And, if you make it over the line of being *enough*, they'll approve of you – and like you – even more.

But there's a few problems with this mindset and we're talking about them today as we wrap up this message series called "Like Me."

The first problem? Trying to cross the line of being *enough*, leads us right into the trap of comparing ourselves to other people. We talked about this at the start of

this series. We know the areas where we do pretty well and get close to the *enough* line. And we also know the areas where we don't do as well – whether it's a subject in school, a sport, instrument, or even interactions with particular people. We tend to compare ourselves with people who seem smarter, cooler, better, nicer, more popular, more talented, more responsible than us, especially in the areas where we don't think we're particularly good. Constant comparison makes us believe that success and good (or great) performance inevitably leads to being liked and accepted. And even liking and accepting yourself. And that's a trap.

And the second problem? In addition to leading us into the trap of comparison with others, trying to get past the *enough* line makes us compare ourselves with ourselves. It can create a standard in our minds that we can never reach. Let's say that you play a great game, perform an incredible solo, or you ace a super hard test. That performance becomes your standard for what is *enough*, which means that you expect yourself to play or perform like that – or better - every time. The enough line is continually raised, along with the pressure to out-do yourself the next time. And that is stressful.

Now, you might say that these problems are actually good, not bad. Comparing ourselves with others and raising the standards for our performance can be great motivators. Yes, they can. But if we don't guard our hearts and our minds, these things can lead us down a path where we decide that we'll never be enough, and we simply aren't enough. Instead of motivating us, it makes us give up on trying. And that makes us not like or accept ourselves and believe that no one else does either.

Okay, that's the bad news. The good news is that what we're talking about today can be a gamechanger for you and me and it's based on words from the Apostle Paul. Paul was one of the wisest teachers of the early church. He shared a ton of practical ways to follow Jesus and experience a great life.

One of Paul's most famous letters was written to people at a church in Rome. In Romans chapter 12, verse 2 he says this:

Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world. But let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect.

Now, Paul's not saying, "Don't copy your favorite musician's style or your favorite athlete's moves." Sometimes copying someone's skills is a great way of learning from them. And that's not bad. No, Paul is saying, "Don't get stuck in the same thought patterns as everyone else."

Think about these things:

- Does it seem like everybody compares themselves to others? It might seem normal because it's so common. But you *can* refuse to participate in comparing yourself. Don't get caught up in the same thought pattern.

- Do advertisements and social media try to convince you that you're not enough unless you buy or use their product or do what they do? You can refuse to believe these messages. Don't get caught up in the same thought pattern.
- Do *most* people you know spend *most* of their time trying to reach or exceed the *enough* line in all of the areas we've mentioned so far? And do they tell you about it – all the time? And does that make you question yourself? You can refuse to participate in the *enough* game altogether. Don't get caught up in the same thought pattern.

Paul is saying that you and I have the freedom to pay attention to the messages being communicated to us and to be empowered in how we respond to them.

Paul says, "Let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think." This is HUGE! Paul is encouraging us to invite God into the way that we think, to pay attention to what we are thinking and then ask God to be a part of it.

What do you think God thinks about you? Remember this – He's a God who loves you unconditionally, and there is nothing you can do or will do that will ever change that. Trying to reach and exceed the *enough* line doesn't have anything to do with what God thinks at all. God wants you to see yourself the way He sees you – as a unique creation, loved and accepted, with great potential. And when you do that, you won't feel the need to continually try to be more or something different than you already are. Instead you'll realize that you're enough today.

Here's a simple way to think about it. Tell yourself this: "I can like me because God loves me." And here's something more. Later on, in Romans 12 verse 6, Paul says this:

Let's just go ahead and be what we were made to be, without enviously and pridefully comparing ourselves with each other, or trying to be something we aren't.

That sums it up. Just go ahead and be what you were meant to be. God has plans for you that only you can fulfill. And He will make sure that you are *enough* to fulfill those plans.

So, where do we go from here? Here's two things to remember:

1. **Invite God into your thinking.** Does your current thinking line up with the way that we have said God thinks about you? You can trust that God loves you unconditionally, and that means you can be totally real with Him. Talk to Him about how you see yourself and what you think about yourself, and what you think others think about you. And ask Him to help you see yourself and think about yourself the way He does.

2. **Invite God into your life.** God has plans for you that only you can do. He will help you be *enough* by guiding you through situations and circumstances that will stretch you and grow you into the person He created you to be. But He wants to be a team with you. He wants to be in your life going through life with you. And that takes communication. Talk to Him about what's happening in your life right now and ask Him to show you the way forward.

Think of it this way: God has an infinite amount of everything. Any category where you feel like you aren't enough, God has plenty of it to share. When you let God into your thinking and into your life, you don't have to worry about being *enough*. God says, "I've got more than *enough* for the two of us."

FAMILY DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Do you have a hidden talent? What is it?
2. Have you ever wished that you were good at something that you aren't? What?
3. Out of these categories, when are you most likely to think that you aren't "enough"? Are there other areas not listed here?
 - a. Smart
 - b. Talented
 - c. Strong
 - d. Funny
 - e. Good-looking
 - f. Responsible
4. Do you feel more pressure from advertisements and social media that try to convince you that you're not enough? Or is there a particular person or group of people who lead you to feel this way? Or both?
5. Talk about a time when you felt like you weren't _____ enough. Why did you feel that way? What happened?
6. When you hear the phrase, "God thinks you're enough," what is your reaction? Is it difficult to believe? If so, why?
7. Read Romans 12:6. What are some areas where you can see that you are gifted or others have said you are gifted? How could you pursue this further?
8. What is one way people around you may be missing out if you don't choose to be your authentic self and lean into the unique ways you are gifted?
9. How could being yourself and discovering the path God has uniquely set for you lead to liking and accepting yourself?
10. Each day this week, talk to God. Tell Him what you are thinking about yourself and ask Him to share how He feels about you. Listen to what you hear in your mind, feel in your heart, and notice around you. Keep an open line of communication with Him every day.