



COMMUNICATOR GUIDE

Like Me / Week 1

PRELUDE

SOCIAL

WORSHIP

STORY

GROUPS

HOME

BOTTOM LINE

Don't compare your worth with their posts.

GOAL OF SMALL GROUP

To help students understand that comparison is unfair because we tend to compare our entire lives (private and public) to the small window of other's lives that we see on social media or at school.

SCRIPTURE

Oh, don't worry; we wouldn't dare say that we are as wonderful as these other men who tell you how important they are! But they are only comparing themselves with each other, using themselves as the standard of measurement. How ignorant! (2 Corinthians 10:12 NLT).

Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it (Proverbs 4:23 NIV).

TEACHING OUTLINE

INTRODUCTION

- Don't you HATE it when things are unfair? For example...
 - When you studied for hours and hours for that history test you barely passed, only to find out your friend got a "B", who you know for a fact got the answers from a friend before he took it! Totally unfair.
- This happens all the time when I'm scrolling Instagram.
 - Her life is so much better because she has that...
- I can go from feeling good about life to feeling like life isn't great in about ten seconds.

TENSION

- In addition to feeling miserable, when we do this, we start to assume that other people have the perfect life. **We look at what they put online, and then match it up to what we know is true about our current reality.**
- We feel less-than and it's typically when we respond in one of the following ways....
 - **We overachieve.**
 - **We do nothing.**
 - **We play it over and over in our minds.**
- Here's the tricky thing about comparing our life to someone else's. We know ourselves too well.

- **We've all perfected the art of projecting the life we want others to *think* we have, even if it doesn't match the life we *actually* have.** And here's what's crazy: we forget that everybody else is doing the same thing.
- Let me say it another way...when we compare ourselves to others—especially on social—we believe things about ourselves based on someone else's half-true, or fully-fake display.
- Comparison has become such a norm in our culture that most of us don't even realize we're doing it.

TRUTH

- One of the greatest teachers and followers of Jesus that ever lived was a man named Paul. He made it his mission to make sure that everyone he met knew how their lives could benefit from following Jesus.
- When Paul wasn't present with the different churches he planted, he made a point to write letters to stay connected.
- In these letters, Paul was known for being pretty direct. He was passionate about following Jesus and leading others to do the same. While everything Paul did was out of love, it's likely that sometimes people felt like they were being called out in areas where they weren't measuring up. In response, they did what a lot of us do—they lashed out. (Have you ever done that?) They began to tear Paul down.
- Listen to how Paul responded these criticisms...
 - *Oh, don't worry; we wouldn't dare say that we are as wonderful as these other men who tell you how important they are! But they are only comparing themselves with each other, using themselves as the standard of measurement. How ignorant! (2 Corinthians 10:12 NLT).*
- **Paul is saying, in no uncertain terms, it's absolutely ridiculous to let your behavior and life be based on a comparison to someone else's behavior or life.**
- If I were to sum things up, Paul was saying, "Hey look. Comparison any human to another human is an ignorant idea and it makes you look silly".
- There's a principle found in the book of Proverbs—a book from the Old Testament of the Bible, a time before Jesus was around, that Paul would've known by heart. It says...
 - *Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it (Proverbs 4:23 NIV).*
- Our hearts matter because they control everything else. So, we should guard our hearts.
- The opposite, one of the quickest ways to destroy our hearts, is comparison. **If we see a post about how great someone else's life is and we allow it to get to our hearts, to mess with what we believe about ourselves, we're in danger.**
- **Don't compare your worth with their posts.**
- Don't make decisions about your worth based on what you see or perceive in other people.

APPLICATION

- How do we actually fight the temptation to allow comparison to rule our lives? How do we guard our hearts like Solomon wisely suggested?
- It may not be easy, but it starts the very word Solomon used: *Guard*. Set some boundaries for what you see and what you allow your heart to participate in. 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.
- You guard your heart when you...
 - Guard your Instagram.
 - Pay attention to how it affects you.
 - Guard your thoughts when you are watching the likes roll in (or not roll in fast enough).
 - Guard your comments.
 - Guard yourself when you interact with others who make your life feel less.
 - Guard who you spend time with who constantly complains about their own life.

- Pay attention to what you do when you feel yourself spiraling into the comparison game.
- So, when that happens, ask yourself these questions:
 1. **What things are fueling how I feel?**
 2. **What are some things I want to do because of how I feel?**
 3. **What or who am I comparing myself to that's bringing up these feelings?**
- We guard our hearts by paying attention to what we feel when we're tempted to play the comparison game.

LANDING

- Remember, **don't compare your worth to their posts.**
- What would it look like if you began to guard your heart when it comes to comparing your life to others?



TEACHING SCRIPT

Like Me / Week 1

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BOTTOM LINE

Don't compare your worth with their posts.

INTRODUCTION

4 MINUTES

Don't you HATE it when things are unfair? For example...

- When you studied for hours and hours for that history test you barely passed, only to find out your friend got a "B", who you know for a fact got the answers from a friend before he took it! Totally unfair.
- When your sister, who never cleans her room, never does her chores, and always messes things up, seems to always get what she wants, while you feel like you hardly ever get what you want. It's frustrating because you're actually the one who keeps things in order around the house, yet you never seem to get any recognition from your parents. It's very unfair.
- Maybe you have to share a car with your brother, but you're the one who always pays for the gas and keeps it clean. Unfair.
- Maybe you have to watch the athletes be excused early from class for the big game. You know that this means they have extra time to prepare for the test.

Unfair, right? I could keep going.

This happens all the time when I'm scrolling Instagram. I can't count the number of times I've been scrolling, totally happy with my life, minding my own business, watching friends' stories, until I see something that completely deflates me...

- She went to my favorite vacation spot for the weekend. Wasn't she just there like last month?
- He got to go to the concert I was dying to see, and it's all over his story.
- His family is still together, which means he doesn't have to change houses every weekend like I do.
- She and all of her siblings are good at every sport they play. I'm pretty sure all of them have been offered full scholarships to play in college.
- She looks good in everything she wears, while I struggle to even have clear skin, let alone look good in an outfit.

He got the newest this...

Her life is so much better because she has that...

You know what I'm talking about.

I can go from feeling good about life to feeling like life isn't great in about ten seconds. All of a sudden, I'm not just disappointed. I'm ticked off.

Nope. It's just not fair.

TENSION

4.5 MINUTES

And you know this already: In addition to feeling miserable, when we do this, we start to assume that other people have the perfect life. **We look at what they put online, and then match it up to what we know is true about our current reality.** And when we do that...

- Their life looks better.
- THEY look better.
- We recognize a familiar reality: Their life > my life.

We feel less-than and it's typically when we respond in one of the following ways....

- **We 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.
- **We do nothing.** Maybe watching others makes you feel like there's no way you can do what they do or be who they are. So why even try?
- **We play it over and over in our minds.** Whether it's anxiety, sadness, jealousy, or motivation to go out there and make your posts look better, you may find yourself unable to think about anything else.

No matter how we respond, the result is the same. It feels bad. That's what comparison does. Here's the tricky thing about comparing our life to someone else's. We know ourselves too well. We know and live the good, the bad, the happy, and the sad. And we know that places like social media are designed to display the highlights of life—just the good stuff. That's why we will do everything we can to make sure that others only see the highlight reel of our lives. We aren't going to post about the fight we just got in with our girlfriend, (on our real Instagram at least), but we will post a fire photo of ourselves and we may even take that one photo 30 times just to make sure that we have the right lighting, look, filter, and angle. OR, we rewrite the same funny comment 30 times to make sure it's *actually* funny. (Admit it. You've TOTALLY done that.)

We've all perfected the art of projecting the life we want others to *think* we have, even if it doesn't match the life we *actually* have. And here's what's crazy: we forget that everybody else is doing the same thing. They're posting their *best life* not their real life. But somehow our brains trick us into believing that *their* highlights are the whole story.

Let me say it another way...when we compare ourselves to others—especially on social—we believe things about ourselves based on someone else's half-true, or fully-fake display.

Comparison has become such a norm in our culture that most of us don't even realize we're doing it. The good news is that what we're going to talk about for the next few minutes will not only help us recognize when we're doing it, but it will also help us understand what to do about it. In a world full of social media, that may seem impossible and totally unrealistic. But hang with me. I think we may be surprised at what IS possible.

TRUTH

6.5 MINUTES

One of the greatest teachers and followers of Jesus that ever lived was a man named Paul. He made it his mission to make sure that everyone he met knew how their lives could benefit from following Jesus. He traveled all over the known world establishing relationships with many different groups of people in different regions who viewed him as an authority figure when it came to how to live a better life, thanks to Jesus.

Paul traveled a lot from town to town in order to maintain relationships with people and offer them the life changing news of who Jesus was and what he offered. When Paul wasn't present with the different churches he planted, he made a point to write letters to stay connected. You could say it was his version of staying connected on Instagram or Snapchat.

In these letters, Paul was known for being pretty direct. He was passionate about following Jesus and leading others to do the same. While everything Paul did was out of love, it's likely that sometimes people felt like they were being called out in areas where they weren't measuring up. In response, they did what a lot of us do—they lashed out. (Have you ever done that?) They began to tear Paul down. Their strategy to feel better about themselves was to make him look worse. In a word, they were petty.

Listen to how Paul responded these criticisms...

Oh, don't worry; we wouldn't dare say that we are as wonderful as these other men who tell you how important they are! But they are only comparing themselves with each other, using themselves as the standard of measurement. How ignorant! (2 Corinthians 10:12 NLT).

I'm not sure but this seems like the ancient tool of *sarcasm*. Paul clapped back at the critics. He wasn't messing around, and in this passage, he's addressing the comparing that is going on among people, and the struggle that it created.

Paul is saying, in no uncertain terms, it's absolutely ridiculous to let your behavior and life be based on a comparison to someone else's behavior or life. And, it's even more ridiculous to spend time figuring out how you measure up to people just like you in order to make yourself look better. If I were to sum things up, Paul was saying, "Hey look. Comparison any human to another human is an ignorant idea and it makes you look silly".

My mom used to tell me, "There's always going to be someone who has more than you, and there's always going to be someone who has less." Her point wasn't for me to focus on people who had less so that I'd feel better about myself. Her point wasn't for me to focus on people who had more so that I would stay humbled. Her point was that comparing with others was pointless. It was a game I would never win.

There's a principle found in the book of Proverbs—a book from the Old Testament of the Bible, a time before Jesus was around, that Paul would've known by heart. It says...

Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it (Proverbs 4:23 NIV).

Solomon, the man who wrote this principle, was passionate about how important it is to guard our hearts. Why? Because what we *do* almost always comes from what we *believe* in our hearts. Our hearts matter because they control everything else. So, we should guard our hearts.

The opposite, one of the quickest ways to destroy our hearts, is comparison. **If we see a post about how great someone else's life is and we allow it to get to our hearts, to mess with what we believe about ourselves, we're in danger.** If it makes us feel less-than or worth-less, it's like an attack on the heart that can ultimately mess with our whole lives.

That's why we have to get this right...

Don't compare your worth with their posts.

- Don't look at someone else, assume that their life is perfect, and conclude that your life is no good because in that moment it doesn't look like theirs.
- Don't make a decision about how you look (or don't look) based on someone else's picture—a picture that was most likely taken 30 times, filtered, face-tuned, and edited

Don't make decisions about your worth based on what you see or perceive in other people.

APPLICATION

3.5 MINUTES

Which sounds great. But how do we actually fight the temptation to allow comparison to rule our lives? How do we guard our hearts like Solomon wisely suggested?

It may not be easy, but it starts the very word Solomon used: *Guard*. Set some boundaries for what you see and what you allow your heart to participate in. 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. You guard your heart when you...

Guard your Instagram. Pay attention to how it affects you.

Guard your Snapchat.

Guard your TikTok.

Guard your scroll.

Guard your thoughts when you are watching the likes roll in (or not roll in fast enough).

Guard your comments.

Guard who you follow.

Guard yourself when you interact with others who make your life feel less.

Guard who you spend time with who constantly complains about their own life.

In other words, when you find yourself in a situation—whether it's on social media or in real life—where you are more likely to compare yourself to others, be on guard. Pay attention. Something is trying to get to your heart, and you need to set a boundary there.

So much of this can be tough to notice in the moment. That's why being 'on guard' can be helpful. Pay attention to what you do when you feel yourself spiraling into the comparison game. Maybe you find yourself overachieving and striving for the attention of others. Maybe you find yourself feeling so deflated that you wonder, "Why do I even try?" Or maybe you find yourself playing the images or words over and over in your mind. When those things happen, pay attention. That's your clue that you're stuck in the comparison game.

So, when that happens, ask yourself these questions:

- 4. What things are fueling how I feel?**
- 5. What are some things I want to do because of how I feel?**
- 6. What or who am I comparing myself to that's bringing up these feelings?**

We guard our hearts by paying attention to what we feel when we're tempted to play the comparison game.

This may seem like a really big task. That's why we are going to head into small group now to talk about what it looks like for you in your life to guard your heart and stop the comparison game.

LANDING

1 MINUTE

You aren't the only one who struggles to compare your life with someone else's. But living a life where you feel less than doesn't have to define how you feel. And it certainly doesn't need to define your worth. Remember, **don't compare your worth to their posts**. What would it look like if you began to guard your heart when it comes to comparing your life to others? Imagine being able to walk in confidence about who you are. Imagine how different your day would be.



TRANSITION INTO SMALL GROUPS
