



COMMUNICATOR GUIDE

This or That / Week 2

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SERIES SUMMARY

THIS OR THAT

A three-week series on comparison.

WEEK 1: God doesn't compare you to others.

WEEK 2: When we stop comparing, we can better celebrate others and ourselves.

WEEK 3: God wants us to see ourselves the way He does.

SCRIPTURE

This made Saul very angry. "What's this?" he said. "They credit David with ten thousands and me with only thousands. Next they'll be making him their king!" So from that time on Saul kept a jealous eye on David (1 Samuel 18:8-9 NLT).

A heart at peace gives life to the body, but envy rots the bones (Proverbs 14:30 NIV).

TEACHING OUTLINE

INTRODUCTION

- All of us struggle with comparison; we measure *this* in our lives next to *that* in someone else's life.
- One of the most powerful feelings comparison causes is jealousy.
- Tell a personal story about a time you were super jealous of someone.

TENSION

- Jealousy is what we feel when we want what someone else has.
- It has the potential to do harm in the way we see ourselves and others.
- Jealousy can make us feel . . .
- Insecure and uncertain.
- Unhappy with what we have and who we are.
- Angry for not having what others have.
- Some of us don't often feel jealous because we feel good about our lives. We may even look down on others because we feel they don't measure up.
- Comparison is a cycle, and we always end up measuring ourselves to others, which often results in jealousy.
- Jealousy doesn't just impact us, it impacts our relationships with others.
- It can cause us to avoid people, talk about them behind their back, and stop being happy for them.
- Jealousy keeps us from celebrating the good things around us, both in our lives and in the lives of others.

TRUTH

- When David and King Saul were both celebrated after a battle victory, Saul became very jealous of David. Jealousy changed the way Saul viewed himself and David, which affected both of their lives in negative ways. (1 Samuel 18:8-9)
- When we compare ourselves to other people, we end up not celebrating others and ourselves in the process.
- In the book of Proverbs, we read that jealousy impacts our lives from the inside out. It can rot and decay who we are and how we think. But peace gives us life. (Proverbs 14:30)
- Saul let jealousy rot his life and the way he viewed David. But David kept his heart at peace and focused on the good that was promised for his life.
- When we stop comparing, we can better celebrate others and ourselves.

APPLICATION

- We can avoid comparison and jealousy, and celebrate the good instead by:
- Starting with ourselves. Think about and celebrate the things we're grateful for in our own lives.
- Celebrating someone else.
- Take a step this week to celebrate the good in your life and to celebrate those around you.
- When we stop comparing, we can better celebrate others and ourselves.

LANDING

- The things we talked about today aren't always easy in real life. That's why you have a Small Group. Your Small Group Leader wants to celebrate you and help you celebrate other people.
- What's one thing or person I can celebrate?

THINK ABOUT THIS

Jealousy is so prevalent in the minds and lives of middle schoolers. They're constantly looking to see how they measure up against someone else, and when they feel like they don't, they often default to jealousy. What isn't as obvious to a middle schooler is the way jealousy impacts their lives and relationships. They may not recognize those effects at all, and if they do, they probably don't see the potential they have to damage relationships, their self-image, and more. The goal of this week's talk is to help open their eyes to the way jealousy (a feeling they all have) can impact them negatively if left unchecked, but also to give them an alternative to jealousy in choosing to celebrate themselves and others. This isn't an easy thing for any of us, but it's a great seed to plant for middle schoolers to begin practicing now.

INTERACTIVE: COMPARISON OR CELEBRATION?

OVERVIEW

For this Interactive, you'll use two signs to help explain that when we stop comparing ourselves to others, we can better celebrate them instead.

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- 2 poster boards, one with the words "COMPARISON and JEALOUSY" written on it and one with the word "CELEBRATION"
- A bold, permanent marker to write on the poster boards
- A way to display the two poster boards (like chairs with backs or easels)

HOW-TO

- Set up the poster boards on stage with enough space to move between them.
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TEACHING SCRIPT

This or That / Week 2

PRELUDE

SOCIAL

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STORY

GROUPS

HOME

BOTTOM LINE

WHEN WE STOP COMPARING, WE CAN BETTER CELEBRATE OTHERS AND OURSELVES.

INTRODUCTION

4 MINUTES

We're right in the middle of a series called *This or That*. What's it about? Well, it's about the one thing that all of us struggle with in some way or another: **comparison**. It's when **we hold *this* in our lives next to *that* in someone's life**. And suddenly, we just don't feel like we measure up. That's comparison, and it's a bigger part of our lives than most of us realize.

Comparing our *this* to their *that* can leave us feeling all kinds of ways—disappointed, hopeless, frustrated, anxious, motivated, and sometimes even like we're better than others. But today, we're going to talk about one of the most powerful feelings comparison brings out in us—**the feeling of jealousy**.

TELL A PERSONAL STORY

Tell a story from your own life that illustrates the following thoughts or ideas . . .

- Talk about a time (preferably in middle school) you were super jealous of someone else.
 - Maybe it was because you wanted a spot on the team, wanted to date someone your friend was dating, or wanted a really cool item of clothing.
 - Be sure to talk about how the jealousy made you feel. Remember, the goal is to set up the idea that when you saw what someone had in comparison to what you had, it left you feeling jealous.
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TENSION

4 MINUTES

INTERACTIVE: Comparison or Celebration?

This is where you'll use two signs to help explain that when we stop comparing ourselves to others, we can better celebrate them instead. Any time throughout the script you talk about comparison, jealousy, and celebration of others, move or motion to the corresponding sign on stage to help emphasize your points.

See, jealousy is a very specific type of comparison. **It's what we feel when we want what someone else has.** And it happens more than we may realize!

When that kid in your class comes in with a new pair of name-brand sneakers, but you're still rocking the ones from last season. When your friend is so much fun that everyone wants to be around them, but you can't seem to muster up the same popularity. When the kid in your Small Group has two parents living at home, but you have a family that's separated. When the other kid gets the solo, or your sibling gets more attention, or that girl has better clothes, or that boy was named team captain.

The list could go on and on, right? If we really think about it, jealousy can show up just about everywhere we turn. And while it may not seem like that big of a deal at first, jealousy has a lot of potential to do harm to both the way we see ourselves and the way we see others.

For starters, jealousy can cause us to feel **insecure**. The more jealous we become of someone else, the more insecure and uncertain we feel about ourselves. And that insecurity can quickly lead us to become **unhappy**. Unhappy with our stuff, unhappy with our appearance, unhappy with our friend group, unhappy with our family, unhappy with our status at school. It's hard to be happy with any part of what we have or who we are when we're letting jealousy motivate the way we see it.

Maybe we even end up **angry**. We're so jealous of what the other person has that we get mad. Mad at our parents for not letting us have what we want, mad at God for not giving us the life they have, and sometimes, mad at the other person for simply having what we want.

Or maybe we don't experience a lot of jealousy when we compare ourselves to others because **we feel pretty good about our lives**. When we look at our *this* compared to other people's *that*? Honestly, we might feel better than them. We might even look down on other people because we feel they don't measure up. But the problem with comparison is that it's a cycle. While we may feel great about our lives right now, it's never enough, is it? So, we keep comparing, keep trying to measure ourselves to others, and eventually, keep getting jealous. It never stops.

And this is where jealousy really gets tricky. Because **it doesn't just impact us, it impacts our relationships with other people**. When we're jealous of someone else, we sometimes start keeping our distance from them. We avoid them because we don't want to deal with the jealousy we feel when we're around them. Or we start talking about them behind their backs. We tear them down to make ourselves feel better. And eventually, we stop being able to be happy for them at all. We stop being able to celebrate the good things in their lives because it only reminds us of what's missing in our lives.

That's what jealousy does! **It keeps us from celebrating the good things around us, both in our lives and in the lives of others.** And for me, that's just not the kind of life I want. I don't want to be unhappy simply because *this* in my life doesn't compare to *that* in someone else's. I don't want to be the kind of friend, or family member, or teammate, or member of a Small Group that can't be happy for someone else or myself.

So, what do we do? How do we keep ourselves from letting jealousy and comparison change the way we see ourselves and others?

TRUTH

4 MINUTES

People have been dealing with this whole jealousy thing for thousands of years. So much so that the Bible has story after story of people whose lives were affected by it. One of those people is a guy named **David**. His story is crazy because he went from being a shepherd boy to a hero on the battlefield to eventually becoming king.

Now at first, the King of Israel at the time, a guy named **Saul**, liked David. After all, David killed a giant named Goliath and saved the nation during battle. That was a big win for Saul's army! Excited over the victory, the people of Israel greeted King Saul with a parade to celebrate as the army returned home from battle. *[Optional: Use confetti poppers to bring this parade to life and add excitement to the story.]* And that's when things started to change.

See, Saul had a major issue with the way the people decided to celebrate. The song they sang celebrated both King Saul *and* David. And as king, Saul didn't want to share his fame and popularity. Take a look at his response:

This made Saul very angry. "What's this?" he said. "They credit David with ten thousands and me with only thousands. Next they'll be making him their king!" So from that time on Saul kept a jealous eye on David (1 Samuel 18:8-9 NLT).

See what happened there? Just like that, jealousy changed the way Saul viewed David. And eventually, that jealousy changed the way he treated David. Saul's jealousy got so bad that he even tried to kill David. Not once, not twice, but multiple times! Why? Because he was jealous!

Saul was happy with his life and even his relationship with David until he started comparing himself to David. That comparison led to jealousy, and that jealousy changed everything. It changed Saul, it changed his relationship with David, and it consumed a big part of Saul's life. Saul spent a lot of his reign as king thinking of ways to hurt David.

I know that's a dramatic story, but that's what jealousy has the power to do. To change the way we see what we have. To destroy our relationships with other people. To kill our ability to celebrate the good things happening in our lives and in theirs. **When we compare ourselves to other people, we end up not celebrating others or ourselves in the process.**

In another place in the Bible, a book filled with wisdom called Proverbs, the writer explained jealousy this way:

A heart at peace gives life to the body, but envy rots the bones (Proverbs 14:30 NIV).

Envy is just another way to say jealousy. And as the writer of this Proverb said, it has the potential to rot, or break down, your bones. Of course, it won't literally do that. The writer was simply painting a picture of the way **jealousy impacts our lives from the inside out.**

But think about your bones for a second. They're a pretty important part of your body. They're the core of what holds you up; they're what makes the shape of you. The writer of this Proverb was painting a pretty awful picture that envy hits at the core of who you are. Jealousy rots you to your core. It decays. It breaks you down. It eats at you.

When you compare your life to someone else's, the jealousy you feel eats at you. It can cause the way you see yourself to break down. It can even rot your ability to celebrate anything good.

That's what happened to Saul. Jealousy rotted everything in his life. It consumed him so much so that he could hardly lead the nation because of it.

But David? He kept his heart at peace. And as the Proverb tells us, that's what gives life to the body. See, while jealousy breaks down, peace builds up. So even though David was hurt by

Saul's jealousy, he never went down the road of comparison with Saul himself. David kept his eyes on what was promised to him—the good in his life—and that helped him stay at peace.

And the same can be true for us! When we keep our eyes focused on what we do have, we'll find more peace. When we stop focusing on what others have, we'll better be able to enjoy the good in our lives and in theirs. We can appreciate the great things happening in other people's lives as well as our own.

Because the truth is this: **When we stop comparing, we can better celebrate others and ourselves.**

APPLICATION

5 MINUTES

So how do we avoid comparison and jealousy and choose to celebrate others and ourselves instead? I think we can begin by doing two things:

1. **Start with you.** Think about what you *do* have that's worth celebrating. And trust me, there *IS* something you have that's worth a celebration. Maybe it's a good relationship with your parents, or a really cool older sibling, or one solid best friend. Maybe it's the fact that you made the team or simply had the courage to try out. Maybe it's a sunny day, or a song you really love, or the fact that you know God loves you. Big or small, start avoiding jealousy by celebrating the good in your own life.
2. **Celebrate someone else.** And I don't mean just anybody else! I want you to try to find a way to celebrate the person you're jealous of right now. I know, that's not going to be easy! But remember, celebration will help you move toward peace. And peace will build you up. This is just as much for you as it is for the other person. So, congratulate them for getting the lead in the play, or compliment their new skateboard trick, or talk positively about them with your friends. And if all you can do is pray for them, that works, too! Prayer is a great place to start celebrating and appreciating someone else.

Here's the thing. I think we could all use a little practice when it comes to celebrating ourselves and celebrating others, right? Well, I've found something to teach us some perfect ways to do just that! Everyone stand up!

INTERACTIVE: Celebration Imitation

This is where you'll have students imitate hilarious celebration GIFs to reinforce your talk's application points in a fun way.

I'm going to put something on screen, and as soon as I do, I want everyone in this room to imitate what that person is doing. Celebrate in the same way they are! Ready? *[Show the first GIF.]* YES! Okay, now try this! *[Show the second GIF.]* You all are really catching on to this whole celebration thing. And finally, for the grand finale, let's see how you celebrate like this! *[Show the final GIF.]*

Okay, every single one of you is now an expert celebrator. That was amazing. And hilarious! And I don't know about you, but now I want to go out and celebrate everything and everyone in my life!

So this week, whatever you choose to do, take a step to celebrate the good in your life and the lives of those around you. Because **when we stop comparing, we can better celebrate others and ourselves.**

LANDING

1 MINUTE

We know it's easy to talk about this here at church, but it's not as simple in your real life. That's why we made sure everybody in this room has a Small Group Leader. These people show up every week because they care about you. They want to celebrate you and help you celebrate other people. They want to help you practice this stuff because they know it can change your life for the better.

So, as you head to Small Group, think about opening up to your Small Group Leader as you answer this question: **What's one thing or person I can celebrate?**



TRANSITION INTO SMALL GROUPS
