



# GAME

## Measure Pressure

PRELUDE

SOCIAL

WORSHIP

STORY

GROUPS

HOME

## OVERVIEW

In this upfront game, players will attempt to roll a Ping Pong ball down the length of a measuring tape and into one of 3 containers of varying sizes and point values. The player who has the most points at the end of 3 rounds wins!

## WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- 2-4 players
- At least 5 Ping Pong balls
- 1 [measuring tape](#)
- 1 [2oz plastic cup](#) (or something similar)
- 1 16oz plastic cup
- 1 large bowl or bucket with a small amount of water in it to prevent Ping Pong balls from bouncing out
- 1 rectangular folding table
- 3 sheets of 8 ½ x 11 inch paper and a marker
- Office tape
- Tape to create boundaries where players will stand during their turn. We recommend gaffers tape ([this multipack](#) is great) because it can be used for many other games, it's easy to see, and it doesn't damage hard floors or carpet. Other options for creating lines include masking tape or string.
- Optional: Use the Score Board feature in DYM Games app by Download Youth Ministry to project the score of each player on the screen. A white/chalk board would work as well.

## HOW-TO

### PREP

- Set up your table about 10 feet from the front of your stage/wall.
- Create a 2'x2' area using tape that players will stand in while playing the game.
- Place your 2 oz. plastic cup, 16 oz. plastic cup (use a small amount of tape to secure the plastic cups to the table so they don't fall over), and large bowl on the table, evenly spaced.
- Use a marker to write point values on each sheet of paper and tape them under each cup/bowl on the edge of the table so they are hanging and visible from the crowd.
  - 2 oz. plastic cup = 25 points
  - 16 oz. plastic cup = 10 points
  - Bowl = 1 point
- Place your Ping Pong balls and measuring tape near the playing area for easy access.

### PLAY

Select your players and have them stand near the taped area, facing the crowd. For each round, each player will have one chance to extend the measuring tape toward the container of their choice and try to roll a Ping Pong ball down the measuring tape and into the container. After 3 rounds, the player with the highest score wins!



# COMMUNICATOR GUIDE

## THIEF OF EVERYTHING / WEEK ONE

---

PRELUDE

SOCIAL

WORSHIP

STORY

GROUPS

HOME

---

### SERIES BOTTOM LINE

**How to keep comparison from stealing the full life you crave.**

### GOAL OF SMALL GROUP

To encourage students to trade comparison for a focus on who God made them to be.

### WEEK 1 BOTTOM LINE

**God doesn't compare you to others.**

---

### SCRIPTURE

- 2 Corinthians 10:12 NLT
- 2 Corinthians 10:18 NLT
- Proverbs 4:23 NLT

---

### TEACHING SLIDES

All scripture, bottom lines, and teaching points that are bolded in this script are also provided as slides in your weekly "Teaching" folder.

---

### TEACHING OUTLINE

#### INTRODUCTION

- We're going to spend the next three weeks talking about something that has the potential to change the way we see ourselves and others.
- **QUESTION:** What's the last thing you got overly involved in?
  - *(Communicator, share a personal story of something you got wrapped up in).*
- In this series, we're talking about another thing we can get overly involved in—it's called **comparison**.
- We all do it—it's natural and normal.
  - It's something that actually steals from us.

## TENSION

- Here's the tricky thing about comparison—it has a way of taking over every part of our lives...
  - Our thoughts.
  - Our words.
  - Our actions.
  - Our relationships.
- **This usually happens in a slow, subtle way, and we almost never recognize it.**
- When we compare ourselves to others, we tend to believe that what they have is better than what we have.
- **When we get caught up in comparing ourselves with someone who has something we feel like we don't, it's an automatic loss for us.**
  - **Then, comparison starts stealing our peace and joy.**
- Without us even realizing it, our peace and joy have been taken by comparison, the thief of everything!
  - **Even when we compare ourselves to someone who *doesn't* have what we have, it still steals from us.**
- Our gratitude for what we have is replaced by fear.
  - **The thing that *should* give us confidence actually makes us feel insecure.**
- We're not the first people to deal with this, and what we talk about today can be a game-changer as we learn to recognize and deal with this subtle, sneaky thief.

## TRUTH

- Thankfully, the humans who lived thousands of years ago—just after the time Jesus was alive on Earth—wrote down a thing or two about their struggles with comparison.
- The passage we're going to look at today was written by a guy named Paul, who was the greatest missionary in the history of Christianity.
- In the letter we're looking at today, Paul addresses what it looks like to get involved in comparison:
  - *"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 basically saying,
  - "We're all just basically creating our own standard of comparison.
  - We're looking at each other and deciding what we think our lives need to look like.
  - At the root of comparison are things like emotion, perception, and what other people say. That's foolish!
  - It's not wise, and it's not helpful."
- A few verses later, Paul tells us to turn our attention elsewhere.
  - *"When people commend themselves, it doesn't count for much. The important thing is for the Lord to commend them" (2 Corinthians 10:18 NLT).*
- Paul is saying we spend our time focusing on other people and how we measure up to them, and it doesn't matter.
  - **Instead, God's encouraging us to turn our focus toward God.**
- God sees us as beloved children no matter what—it has nothing to do with the people around us.
  - **[BOTTOM LINE]: GOD DOESN'T COMPARE YOU TO OTHERS.**
- God designed us to be just the way we are.
  - Instead of getting caught up in comparison, we can choose to remember that in God's eyes, we're always enough.

## APPLICATION

- The book of Proverbs gives us a good starting point for how to protect ourselves from this thief:
  - *"Guard your heart above all else, for it determines the course of your life" (Proverbs 4:23 NLT).*
- So here are some ways you can guard your heart:

- **Pay attention to your feelings.**
- **Find out what's fueling it.**
  - *INTERACTIVE Communicator, hold up a phone and a charger chord) Think about your phone. Even though we pay attention to it all day, we hardly ever think about it, do we? It's just a natural, normal extension of our lives. The only time we do is when the battery is low. That's our cue to do something different—we have to find a cord and recharge it. **Comparing ourselves to others is like having a low battery. It's the sign that we're not guarding our hearts. It's the sign that we need to do something different. We need to turn our attention elsewhere, change what we're exposing ourselves to, or put some things on do not disturb. In the same way that a low battery is a sign to charge it, what if comparing became your signal to focus on the God who loves you so much?***
- **Celebrate what you do have!**
  - **[BOTTOM LINE]: GOD DOESN'T COMPARE YOU TO OTHERS.**

## LANDING

- Every single one of us struggles with comparison in different areas of our lives.
- One of the reasons we have small groups is to give you a place to talk about these things and become more aware of them.
- So, I hope you'll open up about how you may be struggling to break free from comparison with your group.
- As you do, I want you to think about this question: **What's one area of my life where I tend to compare myself to others?**



# TEACHING SCRIPT

## THIEF OF EVERYTHING / WEEK ONE

PRELUDE SOCIAL WORSHIP STORY GROUPS HOME

### WEEK 1 BOTTOM LINE

**God doesn't compare you to others.**

### INTRODUCTION

2 MINUTES

Hi everybody! I'm \_\_\_\_\_, and I'm so glad you're here as we kick off a new series today. We're going to spend the next three weeks talking about something that has the potential to change the way we see ourselves and others. But before we get there, let me ask you a quick question.

What's the last thing you got overly involved in?

- The show you couldn't stop binge-watching.
- The video game you couldn't stop playing.
- The trend you couldn't help but participate in.
- The artist or song you couldn't stop listening to.
- The word or phrase you couldn't stop saying, even if it annoyed everyone else!
- A person you were dating. Too soon?!

*(Communicator, share a personal story of something you got wrapped up in).*

Any of you listen to your music on Spotify? Cool! If you don't, it's okay, you're still awesome! Spotify is where I happen to get my music, and one day at lunch, my cousin showed me one of the options Spotify gives you when you click on the upper right hand of a song...

You can figure out the song credits—who wrote it, who produced it, and what label it was under. You may be thinking, "Who even cares?" That's a fair question. For a solid week or two, I did! I was OBSESSED with knowing who wrote and produced almost every song I've ever loved in the history of my life. I'm not saying it was something cool to get wrapped up in, but I was definitely all in for a while!

We all get it, right? There are times when we simply get overly involved in something.

In this series, we're talking about another thing that we can get overly involved in—it's called **comparison**. We all have times when we get wrapped up in comparing ourselves with others...

- You thought you were strong until they outlifted you by 100 pounds.
- You thought your fit looked great until you saw theirs.
- You thought your crush was awesome until you saw theirs.
- You were excited about your car until they pulled up.
- You thought you were brilliant until you had class with that one person.
- You thought your house was nice until you went to your friend's house.

This list can go on for days!

It's comparison. We all do it—it's natural and normal. But as we'll discover in this series, it's not just something we *do*...

It's something that actually steals from us.

---

## TENSION

3 MINUTES

Here's the tricky thing about comparison—it has a way of taking over every part of our lives...

- Our thoughts.
- Our words.
- Our actions.
- Our relationships.

They're all impacted. **This usually happens in a slow, subtle way, and we almost never recognize it.**

When we compare ourselves to others, we tend to believe that what they have is better than what we have. After all, we seem to be drawn to comparing ourselves to people who have something we want!

- He has the musical ability you wish you had.
- She has the family you wish you had.
- He has the abs you wish you had.
- She has the social following you wish you had.

**When we get caught up in comparing ourselves with someone who has something we feel like we don't, it's an automatic loss for us.** It's like playing a game we can't win. And even though we theoretically know that nobody has a perfect life, we start to feel like *they* do.

Wait, it gets worse.

**Then, comparison starts stealing our peace and joy.**

- We look at what they have, and we start feeling disappointed in what we have (or don't have).
- Maybe we get angry—we think that they're getting what we actually deserve.
- Maybe we feel hopeless. No matter what we do or how hard we try, we'll never get where they are or have what they have.

Without us even realizing it, our peace and joy have been taken by comparison, the thief of everything!

Let me illustrate this in a simple way. Let's say that there was a day when you felt lonely and wished that you were dating someone. You may think, "I would *never* feel that way!" It's okay, people. It's just an illustration, so relax!

On that day, I can promise you that EVERY couple you passed would seem perfect. It would be like magic! You'd feel like you were surrounded by the happiest couples in human history. You start to see the thing you want most everywhere. That's one of the many subtle ways comparison messes with our minds.

One more thing.

**Even when we compare ourselves to someone who *doesn't* have what we have, it still steals from us.**

- If we're better at that sport, we worry, "What happens if they pass me?"
- If we have that boyfriend, we wonder, "Does she hate me because I'm dating the guy who she wants to date?"
- If we *always* look good, we start stressing as we get ready for the day because we think that people are expecting perfection from us.

Our gratitude for what we have is replaced by fear. **The thing that *should* give us confidence actually makes us feel insecure.**

It's a losing game, friends! That's the bad news.

Here's the good news. We're not the first people to deal with this, and what we talk about today can be a game-changer as we learn to recognize and deal with this subtle, sneaky thief.

---

## TRUTH

### 3 MINUTES

Like we said, comparison is natural and normal. It's part of being human. Thankfully, the humans who lived thousands of years ago—just after the time Jesus was alive on Earth—wrote down a thing or two about their struggles with comparison.

The passage we're going to look at today was written by a guy named Paul, who was the greatest missionary in the history of Christianity. He helped spread the Christian faith, and he often wrote letters to encourage people and help them learn more about God.

In the letter we're looking at today, Paul addresses what it looks like to get involved in comparison. Here's what he said:

*"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 was talking specifically about some false teachers who were bragging about their spirituality to others. However, I think the truths he shared here can still help us with what we're talking about today.

Paul is basically saying, "We're all just basically creating our own standard of comparison. We're looking at each other and deciding what we think our lives need to look like. At the root of comparison are things like emotion, perception, and what other people say. That's foolish! It's not wise, and it's not helpful."

A few verses later, Paul tells us to turn our attention elsewhere. Check it out:

*“When people commend themselves, it doesn’t count for much. The important thing is for the Lord to commend them” (2 Corinthians 10:18 NLT).*

Paul is saying that we spend our time focusing on other people and how we measure up to them, and it doesn’t matter. It doesn’t count for much. In fact, it steals from us. It’s the thief of everything!

**Instead, God’s encouraging us to turn our focus toward God.** God sees us, loves us, and cares about every area of our lives. God’s not basing our worth and value on how we look that day, what type of car we drive, or how much we can bench press. God sees us as beloved children no matter what—it has nothing to do with the people around us.

Think of it this way:

**God doesn’t compare you to others.**

- God’s not looking to see how we line up to the people around us.
- God’s not taking away points when we don’t maintain the image we want to project.

God designed us to be just the way we are. Because of that, God doesn’t need to compare us to anyone else. God sees everything about us through the lens of His love for us. That’s the way God wants us to see ourselves, too! Instead of getting caught up in comparison, we can choose to remember that in God’s eyes, we’re always enough. Focusing on God’s love will shrink the power of comparison in our lives.

---

## APPLICATION

3 MINUTES

The book of Proverbs gives us a good starting point for how to protect ourselves from this thief:

*“Guard your heart above all else, for it determines the course of your life” (Proverbs 4:23 NLT).*

Comparison starts in our hearts. So, if we want to avoid letting ourselves get caught up in the negative parts of comparison, then we have to stop it in the same place!

So here are some ways you can guard your heart:

- **Pay attention to your feelings.** Notice the way your mood or outlook changes when you start to compare yourself to someone else. Do you feel disappointed? Frustrated? Angry? Anxious? Those feelings may be clues that you’re caught up in comparison.
- **Find out what’s fueling it.** What are you looking at, thinking about, or doing when you start to feel those things? What’s fueling your negative feelings of comparison? If it’s something in your control, take a step away from it. Close the app, turn off the TV, take a break from that friend group for a day or so. If it’s something you can’t control, talk to someone who can help. Your small group leader is a great person to start with here! They can help you identify steps you can take to guard your heart and break free from what’s fueling comparison in your life.

## INTERACTIVE

**Media Package subscribers:** Look for *ThiefOfEverything\_RechargeInteractiveVideo\_Week1\_XP3HS* to accompany this interactive. Interested in purchasing the annual media package? Look for the Media Package Add-On in your curriculum dashboard.

*(Communicator, hold up a phone and a charging cable.)*

*Think about your phone. Even though we pay attention to it all day, we hardly ever think about it, do we? It's just a natural, normal extension of our lives. The only time we do is when the battery is low. That's our cue to do something different—we have to find a cord and recharge it.*

---

**Comparing ourselves to others is like having a low battery. It's the sign that we're not guarding our hearts. It's the sign that we need to do something different. We need to turn our attention elsewhere, change what we're exposing ourselves to, or put some things on do not disturb. In the same way that a low battery is a sign to charge it, what if comparing became your signal to focus on the God who loves you so much?**

- **Celebrate what you do have.** Instead of filling your heart with comparison, fill it with the celebration for all the things you do have! The things that you're thankful for, the things you like about yourself, the good in your life. In fact, focusing every day on the way God sees you is a great place to start! A great way to do that is to read Scripture focused on what God says about you. When you're tempted to compare, fill that space in your heart with something better! Fill it with things that remind you of the truth that **God doesn't compare you to others.**

---

## LANDING

1 MINUTE

Every single one of us struggles with comparison in different areas of our lives. The good thing is that we don't have to struggle alone! One of the reasons we have small groups is to give you a place to talk about these things and become more aware of them.

So, I hope you'll open up about how you may be struggling to break free from comparison with your group today. And I hope you don't compare the way you answer the questions to the way that someone else does! Let's be safe people to be honest with each other in group.

As you do, I want you to think about this question: **What's one area of my life where I tend to compare myself to others?**



TRANSITION INTO SMALL GROUPS

---

# SMALL GROUP LEADER GUIDE

## THIEF OF EVERYTHING / WEEK ONE

### BEFORE GROUP

#### BOTTOM LINE

God doesn't compare you to others.

#### 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)**

*When people commend [or compliment and praise] themselves, it doesn't count for much. The important thing is for the Lord to commend them.*

**(2 Corinthians 10:18 NLT)**

*Guard your heart above all else, for it determines the course of your life.*

**(Proverbs 4:23 NLT)**

#### GOAL OF SMALL GROUP

To encourage students to trade comparison for a focus on who God made them to be.

#### THINK ABOUT THIS

Comparison is a universal, human experience. It's something your students have dealt with before, are dealing with now, and will deal with again as they grow up. That's what makes this conversation so valuable! Your students are in a phase of life where the temptation to compare is everywhere! As you lead this week, remember that you're encouraging them toward steps that will help set them free from comparison both in this stage of life and beyond. Even if you don't see the fruit right away, you're planting good seeds!

*Create meaningful conversations. Adjust the questions as needed, and don't feel like you need to answer all of them.*

### DURING GROUP

#### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How often do you think most high schoolers compare themselves to others?
2. What's one thing about yourself that you might compare to someone else?
3. What's one example of something that comparison steals from you?
4. How easy is it for you to believe that God doesn't compare you to others?
5. If you believed God doesn't compare you to others, what's one thing that might change about the way you see...
  - a. Yourself?
  - b. God?
  - c. Others?
6. *Underclassmen Question: What does it mean to "guard your heart"?*
7. What does it look like practically to guard your heart from comparison?

#### TRY THIS

Because comparison is the thief of everything, it's something we all need to pay attention to. As you dive into leading this week, take a moment before group to take stock of what comparison may be stealing from you right now. Write it down, talk it over with a trusted friend, spouse, or family member, and pray that God would shift your own focus away from comparison and back to the freedom you can find in knowing God doesn't compare you to others. It's a great practice to do for yourself and to encourage your few to do with you, too!