



GAME

VIP Challenge

PRELUDE

SOCIAL

WORSHIP

STORY

GROUPS

HOME

OVERVIEW

Players will attempt to complete challenges that are predetermined by the youth leader. If the player successfully completes the challenge, they will be sent to the VIP section with a friend of their choice for the rest of service.

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- A list of challenges (We've included a list below to get you started.)
- A spinning wheel for your challenges (The [DYM Games App](#) from Download Youth Ministry has a great spinning wheel that you can project onto your screen, or you could write the challenges on small pieces of paper and put them in a bucket or hat.)
- A VIP section in the middle of your crowd/classroom (We've included some instructions below to get you started.)

HOW-TO

PREP

- Set up your VIP section by making a space in the middle of your crowd. Make it comfortable and include snacks!
- Gather or shop for items for your VIP Section. Feel free to use the list we've included below or get things you know your students will love.

Tip: We recommend making the VIP section as amazing as possible. This will set up the game so that students will try *anything* to spend the rest of service there. However, if a player decides they don't want to try the challenge, that's okay! Never force a student to do something they don't want to do in front of their peers.

Challenges:

- Drink a glass of pickle juice
- Sing the chorus of any Taylor Swift song
- Let a youth leader do your makeup
- Moonwalk
- Arm wrestle that leader who was in the Marines (Win or lose, they go to the VIP section!)

PLAY

Choose a player from the crowd and have them spin the wheel. If the player successfully completes the task the wheel lands on, send them to the VIP section with a friend of their choice! If they do not complete the task, choose another person from the crowd to either attempt the same challenge or spin again. Depending on the size of your VIP section, end the game when all the seats are full.



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HOW-TO

VIP Section Ideas:

- Replace a few chairs in your crowd area with a couch.
- String up some white Christmas lights over the area.
- Make a sign that says "V.I.P"
- Put snacks and drinks on a serving tray and have volunteers deliver them while the message bumper video is playing.
- Put a few of your ministry t-shirts or other swag on the seats.



SMALL GROUP LEADER GUIDE

THIEF OF EVERYTHING / WEEK THREE

BEFORE GROUP

BOTTOM LINE

Choose to see yourself the way God does.

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 NLT)

So, since we find ourselves fashioned into all these excellently formed and marvelously functioning parts in Christ's body, let's just go ahead and be what we were made to be, without enviously or pridefully comparing ourselves with each other, or trying to be something we aren't.

(Romans 12:6 MSG)

GOAL OF SMALL GROUP

To help students discover the way God sees them and to point them toward taking steps to see themselves in a similar way.

THINK ABOUT THIS

This week's conversation encourages students to see themselves the way God does. This may be a new concept for some! You may have students who have never thought about the fact that God sees them *all*. This means students who think God has little reason to think positive things about them, or students who have no clue how God might feel about them. Keep these viewpoints in mind as you lead this week. Not only do you want to help them understand the good, positive things God thinks about them, you want them to also recognize that, no matter what, those things are always true about who they are.

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. Who is one person you look up to?
2. How might looking up to someone unintentionally lead to comparison?
3. What's one thing that makes you feel like you're not good enough?
4. What does that feeling steal from you?
5. What's one thing you think that God thinks is true about you?
6. Where did that belief come from for you?
7. What might change about the way you saw yourself if you believed God loves you just the way you are?
8. What's one untrue thought you may be thinking about yourself right now?
9. What's one truth you can replace it with to remind you of what God thinks about you?

TRY THIS

Go out of your way to plan something fun for your group! So much bonding can happen in activities that take place outside of your typical gathering. Whether it's meeting for dinner, catching a movie, a game night, or spending time at someone's house, create an opportunity for your students to spend time with and get to know each other outside of group this week!



COMMUNICATOR GUIDE

THIEF OF EVERYTHING / WEEK THREE

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 help students discover the way God sees them and to point them toward taking steps to see themselves in a similar way.

WEEK 3 BOTTOM LINE

Choose to see yourself the way God does.

SCRIPTURE

- Romans 12:2 NLT
- Romans 12:6 MSG

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've been talking all about the ways we can get caught up in it and what we can do to break free from comparison.
- As we kick off today, I want you to think for a second about this question: Who is somebody you look up to right now?
 - ****Communicator, share a personal story of someone you looked up to.**
- See, we all know what it's like to idolize someone so much that we want to be just like them, right?
 - In other words, we can't compare.

TENSION

- Oftentimes, this is what we do with the people we look up to—we compare our lives to theirs.
- Now, let me clearly state: there's *definitely* nothing wrong with looking up to someone, being inspired by them, or even hoping to be like them!
 - **The problem comes when the comparison shows up.**
- When we make the switch from looking up to them to thinking that in order for us to be enough, we have to achieve what they've achieved, do what they've done, or become like they are.
 - **The more we look at *them*, the worse we feel about *us*.**
- On your own, you feel okay about who you are and the way your life looks.
 - **But as soon as you compare a part of your life to a part of theirs, you suddenly feel like you're not enough.**
- We're so caught up in comparison with *them* that it changes the way we see *us*.
 - **It becomes the thief of self-esteem, self-worth, and confidence.**
- The question is, how do we break out of this cycle of never feeling like we're enough?

TRUTH

- To help us with this, we're going to look at something that a guy named Paul—a leader in the church—wrote to other Christians thousands of years ago.
- The people he wrote to in this particular letter were dealing with the temptation to compare themselves to people around them, *especially* people who didn't have faith like they did.
 - *"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 NLT).*
- Paul told them right away not to copy the people around them. But Paul didn't stop there.
 - Paul's not just talking about a good thing to *do*—stop copying and comparing to others.
 - **He's talking about a new way of thinking!**
- He put a lot of focus on *you*.
 - **It's a shift in focus to go from comparing yourself to *them* to allowing God to transform *you*.**
- When you and I start to understand what God says about us and how he sees us, it has the potential to change everything.
- When old thinking is replaced by new thinking, it takes our focus off of someone else's life and moves it toward who God created us to be.
- This is how we break the cycle of comparison and never thinking we're enough.
- But I want you to think about a few key words Paul uses in between talking about them and talking about you...
 - *"But let God transform you."*
- This means you DECIDE to let Him
 - **[BOTTOM LINE]: CHOOSE TO SEE YOURSELF THE WAY GOD DOES.**
- *INTERACTIVE: (Have two cups of different sizes, and two things of different value. For example, have five quarters and five \$1 bills. Hold up the first bucket).*
 - This is what it's like when we choose to compare ourselves to others. (*Put the quarters in the first cup as you talk through this list*). We focus on...
 - Their talents.
 - Their money.
 - Their looks.
 - Their popularity.
 - Their grades.
 - Their humor.
 - (*Move that cup to the side and replace it with bigger cup*). However, when we choose to see ourselves the way God sees us, it's different. (*Put the dollars in the second cup as you talk through this list*). We focus on...
 - God's love for us.
 - The worth God assigns to us.
 - How valuable God says we are.
 - God's purpose for our lives.
 - The gifts and talents God's given us.

- *(Hold the cup with the dollars)* This is a much more valuable place to focus, and you can carry it with you at all times.
- A few verses later, Paul says this:
 - *“So, since we find ourselves fashioned into all these excellently formed and marvelously functioning parts in Christ’s body, let’s just go ahead and be what we were made to be, without enviously or pridefully comparing ourselves with each other, or trying to be something we aren’t” (Romans 12:6 MSG).*
- Paul is saying, “Let’s just go ahead and be who we were made to be.”
 - The more we can focus on *that*, the more it will change our thinking and eventually change *us!*

APPLICATION

- Believing this truth has the potential to help you break free from comparison and put the thief in lockdown.
- Let’s start by trying two things:
 - **Identify what’s not true.**
 - **Replace old thoughts with new ones.**
- Over time, I think you’ll begin to see God open your eyes to more amazing things about who you are and how God created you.

LANDING

- And listen, isn’t this a much more freeing—and less exhausting—way to live?
 - **[BOTTOM LINE]: CHOOSE TO SEE YOURSELF THE WAY GOD DOES.**
- Because listen, God sees you with so much worth, value, and incredible love!



TEACHING SCRIPT

THIEF OF EVERYTHING / WEEK THREE

PRELUDE SOCIAL WORSHIP STORY GROUPS HOME

WEEK 3 BOTTOM LINE

Choose to see yourself the way God does.

INTRODUCTION

3 MINUTES

Hi, everybody! We're in the last week of our series on comparison called *The Thief Of Everything*. We've been talking all about the ways we can get caught up in it and what we can do to break free from comparison.

As we kick off today, I want you to think for a second about this question: Who is somebody you look up to right now? Or maybe you used to look up to them when you were younger...

- An athlete
- An actor
- A musician
- A dancer
- A designer
- A YouTuber
- A writer
- A comedian
- A podcaster
- An inventor

This list can go on for days. Who is someone that you admire for what they do? You watch them doing what they do best, and you think, "That's awesome! And I would love to be doing the same thing one day!"

***Communicator, share a personal story of someone you looked up to.*

When I was in high school, two of my older sisters were in college at a very small, private college, and I went to visit them a couple of times. Once I even stayed in the dorm with some of their guy friends. I thought it was the greatest thing ever!

One of those guys was named Brian. He kind of took me under his wing. I later figured out it was because he wanted to date one of my sisters, but I didn't know it at the time! He was the coolest guy. He played

college basketball. I remember watching him play an amazing home game and then hang out with me afterward. I thought I was the coolest guy ever!

Brian's family had a lot of money, so everything he owned was top-notch. I came from a poor family, so I guess you could say that everything I owned was low-notch! Brian was not only the guy that I wanted to be when I grew up, he was actually the guy I wanted to be right then.

As much as I loved hanging out with Brian—the cool, wealthy, college basketball star—it was always a disappointment when I got back home...

- I played on a terrible high school basketball team, and I was *never* going to be good enough to play in college.
- I didn't own cool stuff. I literally wore my grandpa's hand-me-down clothes (which is pretty awesome when you think about it *now*. But it wasn't back *then*).
- I didn't have the freedom of college—I was still under my parents' strict rule.

It's like who Brian was served as a reminder of who I wasn't!

See, we all know what it's like to idolize someone so much that we want to be just like them, right? The problem is that eventually we realize that our lives aren't the same. Not even a little bit.

In other words, we can't compare.

TENSION

2.5 MINUTES

In this series, we've been talking a lot about comparing ourselves with other people. Oftentimes, this is what we do with the people we look up to—we compare our lives to theirs. It's what I did with Brian.

Now, let me clearly state: there's *definitely* nothing wrong with looking up to someone, being inspired by them, or even hoping to be like them! This is why we put you with incredible small group leaders each week. It's a great thing to have people you can look up to who can motivate you to make positive changes, live a more full life, and draw closer to God. That's an incredible gift!

The problem comes when the comparison shows up. When we make the switch from looking up to them to thinking that in order for us to be enough, we have to achieve what they've achieved, do what they've done, or become like they are. The reality is, that kind of comparison will always leave us feeling like we're not enough. **The more we look at *them*, the worse we feel about *us*.** That's what happened with Brian and me, and it's why I always felt disappointed after I had spent time with him—I was comparing my life to his.

Every day, you and I see people that we could look up to...

- Upperclassmen.
- Older siblings.
- The girl on your team.
- The guy in your class.

Even peers and friends can fit within this category. And that's fine! On your own, you feel okay about who you are and the way your life looks. **But as soon as you compare a part of your life to a part of theirs, you suddenly feel like you're not enough.**

- Not cool enough.
- Not smart enough.
- Not attractive enough.
- Not talented enough.
- Not rich enough.
- Not funny enough.
- Not popular enough.
- Not good enough.

We're so caught up in comparison with *them* that it changes the way we see *us*. And it's NOT change for the good. **It becomes the thief of self-esteem, self-worth, and confidence.** And what's worse is that it doesn't seem to end. As soon as we start to feel like we're smart enough, we'll look around and think we're not popular enough. As soon as we think we're popular enough, we'll start to think we aren't attractive enough. Somehow, it will never be enough!

If that sounds exhausting, it's because it is. It's the thief of everything, and it's not how you and I need to be living our lives. There's got to be a better way, right? The question is, how do we break out of this cycle of never feeling like we're enough?

TRUTH

5 MINUTES

To help us with this, we're going to look at something a guy named Paul—a leader in the church—wrote to other Christians thousands of years ago. The people he wrote to in this particular letter were dealing with the temptation to compare themselves to people around them, *especially* people who didn't have faith like they did. This was a case of Christians comparing themselves to non-Christians, but what Paul says can apply to all different types of comparisons.

Paul 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” (Romans 12:2 NLT).

Paul told them right away not to copy the people around them. And he could've stopped there, right? He could've said, “Hey, don't copy the behavior and customs of this world!” and that's it. It was definitely something they needed to hear, and that sentence alone was a good reminder for them to quit worrying so much about the people around them.

But Paul didn't stop there. And I think the reason why is because he knew this isn't easy. It's like telling a kid, “Don't eat too much candy.” That's difficult. Comparing is something that we all struggle with. I think that's why Paul took it an important step deeper. He said, *“But let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think.”* Paul's not just talking about a good thing to *do*—stop copying and comparing to others. **He's talking about a new way of thinking!**

- He's talking about a transformation—a major change.
- A change into what? A whole new person!
- And it all starts by allowing God to change the way we think.

See, Paul put a tiny bit of focus on *them*. He said, “Don’t copy or compare.” He put a lot of focus on *you*. He said, “Let God transform *you*.” **It’s a shift in focus to go from comparing yourself to *them* to allowing God to transform *you*.**

When you and I start to understand what God says about us and how He sees us, it has the potential to change everything. When old thinking is replaced by new thinking, it takes our focus off of someone else’s life and moves it toward who God created us to be. We can choose to live with this mindset everyday by being intentional about the things we think about, thanking God for the good in our lives. This is how we break the cycle of comparison and never thinking we’re enough. This is how we lock up the thief of everything!

But I want you to think about a few key words Paul uses in between talking about them and talking about you:

“But let God transform you.”

This means you DECIDE to let Him. You proactively determine to move in a different direction.

Think of it this way:

Choose to see yourself the way God does.

INTERACTIVE

Media Package subscribers: Look for [ThiefOfEverything_CountingQuartersorDollarsInteractiveVideo_Week3_XP3HS](#) to accompany this interactive. Interested in purchasing the annual media package? Look for the Media Package Add-On in your curriculum dashboard.

(Communicator Note: Have two cups of different sizes, and two things of different value. For example, have five quarters and five \$1 bills. Hold up the first bucket.)

This is what it’s like when we choose to compare ourselves to others. *(Communicator Note: Put the quarters in the first cup as you talk through this list.)* We focus on...

- Their talents.
- Their money.
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- Their popularity.
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(Move that cup to the side and replace it with bigger cup). However, when we choose to see ourselves the way God sees us, it’s different. *(Put the dollars in the second cup as you talk through this list).* We focus on...

- God’s love for us.
- The worth God assigns to us.
- How valuable God says we are.
- God’s purpose for our lives.
- The gifts and talents God’s given us.

(Communicator Note: Hold the cup with the dollars.) This is a much more valuable place to focus, and you can carry it with you at all times.

A few verses later, Paul says this...

“So, since we find ourselves fashioned into all these excellently formed and marvelously functioning parts in Christ’s body, let’s just go ahead and be what we were made to be, without enviously or pridefully comparing ourselves with each other, or trying to be something we aren’t” (Romans 12:6 MSG).

Paul is saying, “Let’s just go ahead and be who we were made to be.” We are made by God, and we are loved by God. We were formed and created with specific gifts and traits that make us more than enough! The more we can focus on *that*, the more it will change our thinking and eventually change *us!*

APPLICATION

2 MINUTES

Believing this truth has the potential to help you break free from comparison and put the thief in lockdown. It also has the power to help you change your thinking into believing that you’re enough.

Let’s start by trying two things:

- 1. Identify what’s *not* true.** In order to really change your thinking and start believing what is true about you, you’ve got to first identify what’s *not*. Ask yourself, “What areas of my life leave me feeling like I’m not enough?” Look for the places in your life that lead you to compare. Also, think about some of the negative things you think about yourself on a regular basis—things like *I’m not attractive, popular, or smart enough*.
- 2. Replace old thoughts with new ones.** Identify the negative thought, and then come up with something positive to replace it with. Maybe something like, *I’m a great friend*, or *I’m generous*, or *I’m really good at playing the guitar*. You can also replace your thoughts with truths about who God says you are. You can literally say things like...
 - *God says I am loved.*
 - *I’m a child of the King.*
 - *God considers me a friend.*
 - *I am important to God.*
 - *God made me with incredible gifts!*
 - *The Spirit of God lives in me!*

Whatever it is, pick something that celebrates who you are and who God made you to be. Let those new, true thoughts help you break free from the cycle of comparison.

This may not be easy at first. Ask God to help you. You may have to find a place where you can write down these truths and say them out loud over and over again. One day, they will sink in! Over time, I think you’ll begin to see God open your eyes to more amazing things about who you are and how God created you. You’ll begin to see that to God, you’re enough!

LANDING

1 MINUTE

And listen, isn't this a much more freeing—and less exhausting—way to live? Imagine if instead of living with a thief, you could start living in freedom! **Choose to see yourself the way God sees you.** Because listen, God sees you with so much worth, value, and incredible love!



TRANSITION INTO SMALL GROUPS
