

#REALME



READING PLAN



WEEK 1

# **Social Media and My Identity**



# SOCIAL MEDIA AND MY IDENTITY



## Watch Video

### DAY 1:

Nothing is more aggravating to an older sibling than having a little brother or sister copy their every move. And while games of “copycat” can be annoying, the desire to imitate is rooted in love. Because little children adore their older family members, they often imitate the way they speak and act.

When we choose to follow Jesus, we become a beloved child in God’s family. And just like an earthly parent-child relationship, that status of “child” is a role we did nothing to earn and could do nothing to lose.

Just as our families influence our behaviors and choices, our membership in God’s family begins to change how we think, speak, and act. Over time, our behaviors begin to line up more and more with our identity as God’s child, and we begin to bear what you could think of as a “family resemblance” to our heavenly Father: our attitudes and actions are a reflection of his love.

### REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

1. Describe the relationship between our identity as children of God and our choices. According to the passage, do our choices form our identity, or does our identity inform our choices? What’s the difference?
2. What specific behaviors should children of God avoid, and which ones should they pursue?
3. What role do you see social media playing in your life as you try to be an “imitator of God?” Does your time online help you to please God or make it harder to please God?
4. Do you see any gaps between who God made you to be and who you are right now? Step out of the darkness and into the light; confess these areas of sin to God and a trusted Christian friend. Ask for help as you seek to imitate God in your thoughts, words, and actions.



## Read Ephesians 5:1-14

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# SOCIAL MEDIA AND MY IDENTITY



## Watch Video

### DAY 2:

What makes you, “you?” Is it your personality and your style? Your tastes and your talents? While those things are part of what makes each of us unique, they’re not the essence of our identity: for followers of Jesus, the core truth of who we are is our identity as children of God.

To help us understand that new identity, the author of this passage uses descriptive language, imagery, and metaphors. Have you ever thought of yourself as a “living stone?” Probably not. But what that means is that God is using you, along with other believers, to build his spiritual Church.

Right now, you might think of yourself as just a normal teenager, but in Christ you are a royal priest; you can approach God boldly and freely enter into his presence!

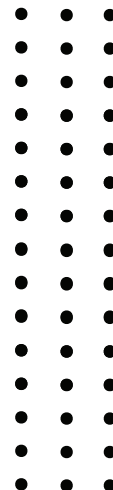
As you read this passage, you’ll see a few more images and metaphors. Find as many as you can and see how they help you understand your identity as God’s child!



## Read 1 Peter 2:4-10

### REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

1. This passage is filled with powerful descriptions of our identity in Christ: Believers are called “living stones,” “holy priests,” “God’s very own possession,” and as “called out of darkness and into his wonderful light.” Which of these descriptions is most meaningful to you right now? Why?
2. Do you find that social media helps you see yourself the way God made you to be? In what ways does it encourage you? In what ways does it distract or confuse you?
3. Throughout this passage, the “you” is plural. This shows us that God is at work on both the individual and community level. How can belonging to a community of believers impact you as you grow in your individual identity?



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# SOCIAL MEDIA AND MY IDENTITY



## Watch Video

### DAY 3:

You can't truly love someone you don't know. You might admire them from afar, but if you don't know them on a deep, intimate level, that admiration will never grow into love.

That's why it's so remarkable that the God of the universe makes himself known to us, his creation. He doesn't stay far off and demand respect and admiration from a distance. He comes close and reveals his character and nature, so that we can fully know him and love him.

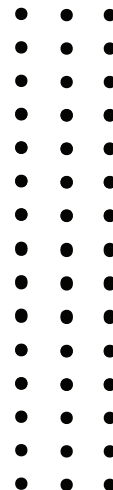
Knowing God is the key to loving him and becoming more like him. Think back to Day 1's passage. It began with a command: "...be imitators of God ...." How can we imitate him unless we know him?



## Read Exodus 34:4-9

### REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

1. Think about the ways God describes himself. Which of these descriptions have you experienced firsthand in your life?
2. God describes himself as loving (compassionate, merciful) and just. ("I do not excuse the guilty.") How can God be both of these things at the same time? What does the fact that he is both reveal about his identity?
3. Which of God's attributes do you find the most challenging to imitate? How can you ask God to help you grow in this area?
4. Think about the time you spend online. Does that time leave you feeling encouraged or discouraged about your identity? Is it pulling you toward a better understanding of who God is and your identity in Christ? Ask God to give you wisdom and ask him to transform every aspect of your life, both online and offline, so that you reflect who he is to the world.



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WEEK 2

# **Social Media and My Community**



# SOCIAL MEDIA AND MY COMMUNITY



## Watch Video

### DAY 1:

When you think of gifts from God, you might think of things like material blessings, special spiritual strengths, or answers to prayer. But the Bible teaches us that one of the greatest gifts God gives his people is community--other members of God's family that encourage us, teach us, and help us grow in our faith.

While there are tons of spiritual resources available to us online (including this app!), we'd be missing out on one of God's greatest gifts if we try to replace face-to-face community with a virtual one. No podcast or Instagram account could ever replace the personal accountability and guidance that comes with walking through life with other believers! This kind of redeemed community helps us grow to be mature believers that walk in truth and love.

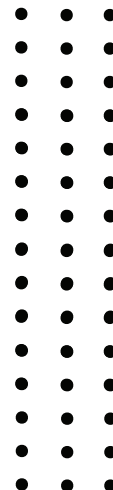
God designed us this way, and it's only in an authentic community that you can grow to be all that God created you to be!



## Read Ephesians 4:11-16

### REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

1. Have you ever experienced true community as it's described here? How could belonging to a Christian community help you grow in your identity as a follower of Jesus?
2. What does it mean for a Christian community to "speak the truth in love?" (verse 15) Why do you think truth is so essential to an authentic community?
3. Thanks to social media, we are exposed to more ideas and philosophies than ever before. How do you determine what's false teaching and what's not? How could belonging to a community of believers help you do that?



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# SOCIAL MEDIA AND MY COMMUNITY



## Watch Video

### DAY 2:

Have you ever noticed that people who hang out together start talking alike, dressing alike, and sharing the same favorite things? It happens to all of us: we grow to be like the people who surround us.

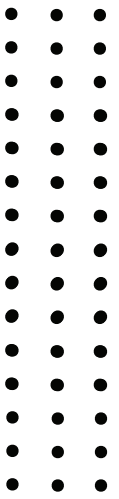
That's why your school guidance counselor probably has a poster with something like, "Show me your friends, and I'll show you your future!" hanging on the wall--but this isn't some modern sociological theory. The ability of our friends to influence us for better or worse is a biblical truth. And that truth should get us thinking about the people we allow to speak into our lives. Whether they're friends we meet in real life or online, their presence has the power to change us.



## Read Proverbs 1:8-19

### REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

1. In the passage, we see how the young man's "friends" tempt him by saying how fun and thrilling it will be to engage in sin. Is social media a place where you experience this same kind of temptation? Does your time online help you make wise decisions or cause you to stumble into sin?
2. What are some positive and negative ways that your friends have influenced your identity and choices?
3. Where do you most feel a sense of belonging? Do those people share a love for godly wisdom, or are your friendships based on something else? Ask God to give you a love for the truth of the gospel and for him to bring you Christian communities and face-to-face friendships that draw you closer to him.



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# SOCIAL MEDIA AND MY COMMUNITY



## Watch Video

### DAY 3:

Most standard desktop backgrounds are pictures of nature. From blue skies and sandy beaches to majestic mountains and dramatic sunsets, it's pretty ironic that while we work indoors, plugging away at our assignments, an image of the great outdoors lies in the background.

Why did software designers choose those pictures? It's because we all benefit from looking up from our current circumstances and looking ahead to something different.

While minimizing your spreadsheet to reveal a picture of a sunrise might offer only momentary relief, we can apply the concept to our Christian communities; a glimpse of what's coming can give us the momentum we need to persevere, even when we feel discouraged or hopeless.

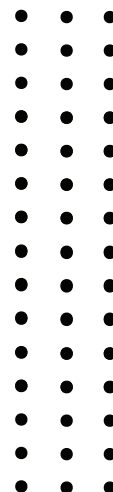
Think of what you're about to read as a beautiful image of what awaits us in heaven: While our current communities are far from perfect, a perfect community awaits us!



## Read Revelation 7:9-17

### REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

1. What detail of this passage makes you most excited for heaven? How can remembering these future promises help you in your present circumstances?
2. Have you ever been disappointed by a fellow believer or experienced hurt in a Christian community? How did that experience affect your view of the church? How does this glimpse of our heavenly community give you hope?
3. Jesus taught us to pray, "Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven." While our earthly communities will never be perfect, we can be part of bringing them more in line with how they will be in heaven. What can you start doing now in your community to make it resemble what God promises it will be like in the future?



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WEEK 3

# **Social Media and My Message**



# SOCIAL MEDIA AND MY MESSAGE



## Watch Video

### DAY 1:

Throughout this series, we've been examining our identity as followers of Jesus. This new identity comes with a purpose: We are now ambassadors of Jesus' message and God's kingdom.

An ambassador's job is to speak for another person. For followers of Jesus that means we speak for Christ. No pressure, right?

The good news is that God equips us for this huge responsibility. One of the tools God has given us is his Word, the Bible. God reveals his values, his heart, and his will in its pages, and by studying who God is, we can reflect the values of God's kingdom to the world.

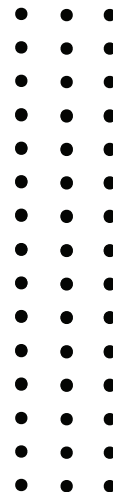
When we consume God's word, our words start to become more and more like his!



## Read Psalm 19:7-14

### REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

1. How does the psalmist feel about God's commandments? Compare this to the way you feel about God's word. Have you experienced those emotions while reading the Bible? Ask God to give you a desire and love for his word.
2. What are some of the purposes God's word can serve in our lives? How have you seen Scripture encourage, warn, or convict you in your own life?
3. Think about the words you've spoken recently and the meditations of your heart. Are they pleasing to God? If God is showing you a particular area of sin, thank him for revealing it to you and confess it to him! Like the psalmist, pray that your words and thoughts would please God as you reflect him to the world.



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# SOCIAL MEDIA AND MY MESSAGE



## Watch Video

### DAY 2:

Christians were called to be ambassadors long before the invention of social media, but its presence gives us a bigger platform than ever before. With just a few clicks, you can express your thoughts, likes, and dislikes to thousands of people, and it's tempting to express all of those opinions behind the safety of the screen. But our words don't just exist virtually; their effects are very real.

Whether they're spoken, tweeted, or texted, your words have influence and the power to help or hurt other people. Ultimately, your words are an opportunity to reflect the kindness that God shows you every day.

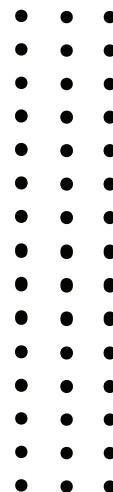
So what are your words doing? Are they helping or hurting the people who hear them?



## Read Ephesians 4:29-32

### REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

1. Take some time to thank God for the love, forgiveness, and kindness he shows in your life. Ask him to help you show the same love to others.
2. Do your words worship God or wound others? Take some time to confess the ways you've used your words to hurt other people and seek out their forgiveness.
3. Think about what you share on social media and compare it to the passage you just read. Are your posts filled with the things God wants us to get rid of? Or are they reflections of his kindness to you? Ask God to help you use your social media presence to glorify him and reflect his love for people.



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# SOCIAL MEDIA AND MY MESSAGE



## Watch Video

### DAY 3:

Most people can tell you about Jesus' actions--the miracles he performed, his death, and, of course, his resurrection--and while these are obviously important, they tend to overshadow something else: his message.

In his three years of ministry, Jesus proclaimed one, specific message: "The kingdom of God is near. Repent of your sins and believe the good news."

The good news is that Jesus offers salvation to those who believe and a new way of kingdom living that flips the world's values upside down! Humility and service are valued above pride and dominance. The new humanity created by Jesus trusts God to define good and evil rather than themselves.

Jesus' death and resurrection inaugurated God's kingdom on earth. It is here... and it is still coming. We're living in a sort of "in-between" time. When Jesus returns, his kingdom will fully be here. Until then, we are called to live as citizens of this kingdom. And that means using our lives to continue spreading Jesus' message: "The kingdom of God is here! Repent, believe the good news, and join in God's kingdom!"



## Read Mark 1:14-18

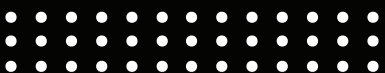
### REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

1. Have you ever thought of yourself as a "fisher of men?" Just as he promised the disciples, Jesus will show you how to "fish for people." Take a minute to thank him for showing you how to reach others with the good news of his kingdom.
2. Think about the flipped value system of God's kingdom: Humility is valued above pride, love means sacrificing our good for the good of others, and we boast in God's glory, not our own. Does your life reflect these "flipped" values? If you're feeling convicted about a particular area, ask God to forgive you and transform the way you think and act so that it reflects his kingdom values.
3. We're all telling a story via social media. What story plays out on your social media: the story of your glory or the story of God's? Ask God to help you proclaim the kingdom of God in every area of your life, both online and offline.



WEEK 4

# **Social Media and My Mission**



# SOCIAL MEDIA AND MY MISSION



## Watch Video

### DAY 1:

What makes you who you are: what you say, or what you do? Most of us would agree that our actions prove our identity. We can say whatever we want, but what we choose to do is the most genuine reflection of who we truly are.

If we say we love Jesus and say we believe God's word, our choices and actions should reflect those truths. No amount of Bible reading or spiritual talk can replace living the way Jesus lived: loving, serving, and sacrificing for others.

Social media gives us a platform to share our words with the world, but without offline actions, those words are meaningless. So we have to ask ourselves: Is what I say, post, and share consistent with what I actually do?



## Read James 1:22-27

### REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

1. Where are some areas where the world needs actions, not just empty words? How can you be part of the solution now, not just when you're older?
2. While it's tempting to read this passage and call out hypocrisy in other people, we have to look inward before we look out to others. In what ways have you been guilty of talking about Jesus but not walking like him? Confess this to God and receive his forgiveness. Thank him for empowering you to glorify him with your words and actions.



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# SOCIAL MEDIA AND MY MISSION



## Watch Video

### DAY 2:

Social media makes it possible to scroll from really serious issues, like tragedies and needs, to silly videos within seconds. You can go from reading about injustice and violence to laughing at a kitten riding a Roomba--all within seconds.

It's a bizarre environment! On one hand, social media gives us unprecedented awareness of the needs around us, but once we're aware, what actions are we taking?

Many of us are guilty of writing a post or sharing a cause and feeling like we've done our part. But God calls us to do more than that. He doesn't just call us to post; he calls us to participate!

True followers of Jesus don't just talk about the causes they claim to care about; they put their faith into action.

And those actions come with a cost. Most of the time, it doesn't cost anything to post your support or share an article or blog post. But

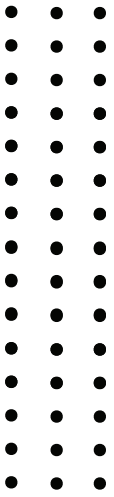
genuinely working for justice in the world WILL cost you something: your time, your energy, and your resources.



## Read James 2:14-26

### REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

1. Have you ever done what James describes in verses 15-16? Share some examples. Why do you think it's such a common problem? Why is it easier to say than do?
2. What's the relationship between faith and deeds? How is this different from earning your salvation?
3. How can we share our faith and actions on social media without being cheesy or boasting? Whom do you see online that's doing this well? Ask God to give you wisdom about what you post online and how you spend your time offline, so that what you say and do is glorifying to him.



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# SOCIAL MEDIA AND MY MISSION



## Watch Video

### DAY 3:

Have the past few days left you feeling convicted? Talking about putting our faith in action cuts us to the core. We have to be brutally honest with ourselves about areas in which we're failing to align our words with our actions.

It's important to remember that God isn't calling us to live according to a set of rules or some impossible standard. Living out an authentic faith isn't about rule-following; it's a reflection of our personal relationship with the living God! Loving God means living like him and loving others the way he does.

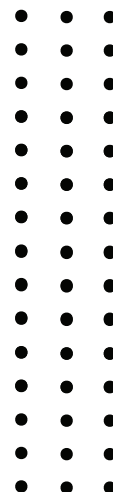
When God is at work in our lives, we will work to serve others, for their good and his glory. We won't just fill our feeds with complaints about our society and causes we say we support; we'll work to restore the brokenness of the world to reflect God's heart for people.



## Read Deuteronomy 10:12-22

### REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

1. According to the passage, what does God require of us? On our own, these commands seem impossible, but we don't have to strive to achieve this by ourselves. What are some ways God equips us to help us obey him?
2. Does your social media presence show people what following Jesus is like? Before you post, ask yourself: Does this reflect God? Am I willing to take action for this cause? Ask God to give you wisdom and surround yourself with godly people who will hold you accountable.
3. Is God showing you people, a cause, or a particular area that needs your help? Are you realizing that taking action is going to cost you something? God will equip you. Ask him to give you the courage to boldly act when others are silent.



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