

CONNECTED

WEEK ONE: THE COMPARISON TRAP

CONNECT

Our world is more connected than it's ever been. We can travel across the world within a single day. Instantly talk or text with anyone that has a cell phone or Internet. We can simultaneously update thousands of friends on social media about the birth of a child...or what we had for breakfast. So many ways to stay connected...yet somehow so many feel more isolated and disconnected than ever.

There are so many things technology does for us...but what is it doing to us?

During this four-week series called Connected, we will address some of the struggles of living life in a digital world.

- How many different types of social media do you use? Why do you use the ones you use? What is your goal? If you don't use any, what keeps you away?
- What is the last thing you purchased, or decision you made, because it was the latest thing, or to impress or keep up with someone else? Or, what have you avoided because of the perception of others? (i.e. perhaps you chose a SUV over a minivan)

DISCOVER

Read Genesis 37:3-11

³Jacob loved Joseph more than any of his other children because Joseph had been born to him in his old age. So, one day Jacob had a special gift made for Joseph—a beautiful robe. ⁴But his brothers hated Joseph because their father loved him more than the rest of them. They couldn't say a kind word to him.

⁵One night Joseph had a dream, and when he told his brothers about it, they hated him more than ever. ⁶"Listen to this dream," he said. ⁷"We were out in the field, tying up bundles of grain. Suddenly my bundle stood up, and your bundles all gathered around and bowed low before mine!"

⁸His brothers responded, "So you think you will be our king, do you? Do you actually think you will reign over us?" And they hated him all the more because of his dreams and the way he talked about them.

⁹Soon Joseph had another dream, and again he told his brothers about it. "Listen, I have had another dream," he said. "The sun, moon, and eleven stars bowed low before me!"



¹⁰This time he told the dream to his father as well as to his brothers, but his father scolded him. "What kind of dream is that?" he asked. "Will your mother and I and your brothers actually come and bow to the ground before you?" ¹¹But while his brothers were jealous of Joseph, his father wondered what the dreams meant.

- Why were Joseph's brothers jealous of him? What impact did their jealousy have on their family? What impact did Joseph have by his own actions?
- How does this story show the importance of parents' role when showing love to their children?
- How might you have responded to the preferential treatment Joseph received from his father?
- What stands out to you from the dreams Joseph shared? If you had dreams like these, how would you share them with others, or would you? Have you had dreams this vivid (whether they were from God or not)? Who did you share them with, and what was their response?

GROW

- Who was perceived as the favorite child in your family growing up? How did that impact the family then? Does it still impact the family now? If so, how?
- When you see all the great "stuff" people post on the internet, how do you prevent yourself from becoming jealous?
- Have you ever ended up hating, being really bothered by, or can't be around someone because of their attitude about God's blessings in their life? Why do you think that happened?
- Read 1 Peter 2:1, "So, get rid of all evil behavior. Be done with all deceit, hypocrisy, **jealousy**, and all unkind speech." Peter considers jealousy to be "evil"; what would our lives look like if we also consider jealousy to be "evil"?

NEXT STEPS

- If you find yourself comparing what others have to what you have and wanting what they have, that's jealousy. Contentment with what you have, and honestly celebrating the blessings of others can help. What is one area where you are jealous? Pray with your group specifically for one another for these and encourage one another to overcome in these areas. Report back next week how you're doing.
- Growing spiritually and building intentional relationships with others can help you overcome in this and other areas. Be sure to sign up for **Men's/Women's Breakfast** on **August 18th**, and sign up for your next **Step** at **Growth Track** on **August 26th**.

