

BIBLICAL CHARACTER *& Media Literacy*

HOMESCHOOL CURRICULUM

Textbook:
MANAGING MEDIA
CREATING CHARACTER
Student Study Guide

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BR-AVE
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Published by Brave Parenting LLC

<https://braveparenting.net>

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Course Description

Biblical Character & Media Literacy

Biblical Character & Media Literacy is an 8-week elective course designed to help students understand how media and technology shape thought, behavior, and relationships. Using a biblical worldview, students study the virtues of patience, respect, kindness, honesty, self-control, humility, and self-worth while analyzing the influence of social media, gaming, smartphones, and AI. Coursework includes reflection, Scripture study, media engagement, discussion, and personal application with an emphasis on discernment, spiritual formation, and wise digital habits.

Grade Level

7-12

Elective Credit

0.5 Credit (Character Education/Biblical Worldview/Media Literacy)

Course Length

8 weeks

Time Commitment

4 hours per week

Materials Needed

Managing Media Creating Character Student Study Guide

Bible (NIV used in *Study Guide*)

Journal/Notebook or printed journaling worksheets

Access to select media content (movies, clips, or music as assigned)

Course Objectives

- Understand how media and technology shape identity, behavior, and relationships.
- Explain biblical principles related to character formation and digital discernment.
- Demonstrate growth in the character virtues of patience, respect, kindness, honesty, self-control, humility, and self-worth in everyday life.
- Evaluate media content through a biblical worldview.
- Develop practical habits for wise, self-controlled use of technology.
- Reflect on personal media use and make intentional changes aligned with their faith.

Course Structure

Each weekly lesson is divided into five sections:

REFLECT (+ JOURNALING)

Personal reflection questions to assess current habits, attitudes, and beliefs.

RELATE (+ SHARE)

Analysis of modern movies, shows, music, or cultural trends through the lens of virtue.

ENGAGE

Viewing and evaluating media with discussion/reflection with family.

STUDY (+ DISCUSSION)

Biblical teaching and guided questions focused on character formation.

APPLY (+ ESSAY)

Practical application and challenges for real-life behavior change.

Course Assessment

Parents or educators may assess student progress using:

- Engagement with Scripture reflection questions in “Study” section
- Participation in shared discussions (natural or through parent/leader guide)
- Completion of weekly “Engaging Media to Build Character” viewing, reflection questions, and/or family interactions
- Depth of thought, realistic goal setting, and literary accuracy in weekly application essay
- Observable growth in habits, attitudes, and self-control.

Grading Options:

- Pass / Fail
- Letter Grade based on completion and quality of responses

Course Outcome

Students will develop a deeper understanding of how media and technology influence their lives and will be equipped to engage with them from a place of Christlike character rather than cultural pressure. The goal is not simply behavior modification, but lasting heart transformation that leads to wise and faithful living in both digital and real-world environments.

Before You Begin...

There is often a real disconnect between students and the adults who guide them regarding online media, technology, gaming, social media, and AI. Part of that disconnect comes from a subtle but powerful lie embedded in modern technology:

You don't need wisdom, authority, or guidance when you have access to unlimited information and endless entertainment at your fingertips.

This message trains students to trust themselves, their feelings, algorithms, influencers, and chatbots more than the wisdom of God or the people He has placed in their lives. But the Word of God cuts through those lies. Scripture is more than information; it transforms hearts, renews minds, and restores truth.

Perhaps this is why you chose this curriculum. Maybe you feel like you allowed too much, too soon, and you hope to redeem what feels disordered or unhealthy. Or maybe you have carefully guarded your student from many of the dangers of online culture and want to prepare them with wisdom before they experience greater freedom and independence.

Either way, the goal of this study is not to exert your authority over online media and technology. The goal is to allow the authority of Scripture to develop Christlike character, shaping how they engage with media and technology for the rest of their lives.

For this reason, parents are encouraged to approach this curriculum as equal learners, pursuing sanctification together. The reality is that adults are often shaped by the same media habits, distractions, temptations, and struggles as students; it just looks different.

It is strongly recommended that your student's textbook (for self-auditing and reflection) remain personal. Students should know they can respond truthfully and without fear that every answer will lead to punishment, embarrassment, or loss of trust. Otherwise, students may simply write what they think parents want to hear rather than what is true. This booklet will provide you with the necessary course information and space for the student's demonstration of understanding.

Clarify this explicitly with your student. There are no "right" or "wrong" answers; there are only honest and true answers. And those, combined with God's word, are what transform hearts and shape character. And that is the only goal!

Week 1: Instructor Introduction

This opening week establishes the foundation for the entire study by helping students understand what character is and why it matters in the Christian life.

Students will begin by defining character not as a reputation, personality, or achievement, but as the inward formation of the heart, ultimately shaped by God. They will contrast the world's view of character (self-made, performance-driven, and image-focused) with the biblical reality that godly character is the result of God's transforming work through the Holy Spirit.

Through the media example of *The Devil Wears Prada* (the original), students will recognize the influence that technology and constant connection can have on a person's values and virtues. Through the biblical example of Moses, students will see that God requires neither strength nor perfection, but obedience and trust.

This week also introduces a key theme that will run throughout the study: **media and technology are not neutral**. They actively shape character and behavior. Students will be challenged to consider whether their media and tech habits are forming Christlike virtue or are subtly reshaping their desires, attention, and identity.

Finally, students are encouraged to take an honest first step of noticing their current habits, acknowledging areas of weakness, and responding with a simple act of obedience. The goal is not radical transformation, but a posture of humility and openness to the Holy Spirit's conviction.

What to Look for:

- Students may default to defining character externally (behavior, image, personality). Redirect them toward heart change and formation.
- Some may feel they don't need to change, while others may be discouraged by their weaknesses. Your own humility and admitted need for heart change can be beneficial here.
- Be prepared to guide discussion around media influence without immediately moving to restriction. The goal is for them to develop self-awareness and set limits for themselves (with your help).

Week 1: Introduction

REFLECT & JOURNALING

*Each chapter begins with a title page asking the question, "What Makes Us Human?"
These will be your DAY 1 journaling prompt each week.*

How does "virtue" help define what it means to be human?

Where do you see technology making life easier for you? Do you think anything important is lost when things become too easy?

Week 1: Introduction

ENGAGING MEDIA

Think about your favorite movie or consider a movie or series you've watched recently.

What character do you like the most?

What virtue do they show as they face problems in the story?

Who or what tries to corrupt their character?

Week 1: Introduction

ENGAGING MEDIA

Think about your favorite movie or consider a movie or series you've watched recently.

Why do most movies portray virtue winning at the end of the story?

Can you think of a movie where *virtue doesn't win* in the end?

Week 1: Introduction

ENGAGING MEDIA for deeper reflection:

Think about how most episodic shows on streaming platforms (like Netflix, Hulu, or Disney+) end as a cliff-hanger. The problems remain unresolved, and virtue has yet to be victorious.

How does this constant suspense and lack of resolution affect the way viewers interpret virtue, morality, and real-world problem-solving?

Binge-watching is a way to resolve the suspense of each episode. Yet, binge-watching can also demonstrate a lack of patience and self-control. So, would you argue binge-watching is a more positive or negative behavior? Why?

Week 1: Introduction

STUDY / DISCUSSION

Read Exodus 3:11, 4:10-13; Exodus 14:13-15; and 2 Timothy 2:22 and discuss the following questions with parent/grandparent/mentor.

What does God's response of, "I will be with you" teach us about where true character, courage, and ability comes from?

How do trust and obedience work together in shaping character? (How did Jesus model trust and obedience?)

Paul writes that believers are to "flee the evil desires of youth". What are some evil desires students your age has? *Follow up: How does this verse show that transformation of those desires isn't passive, but active?*

Week 1: Introduction

SHORT ESSAY

Read the following prompt carefully. Take a few minutes to think through its ideas, then write a structured response that explains your reasoning and supports your argument. Responses should be approximately 300-500 words.

Media and technology are not all bad or all good, but they are not neutral either. They shape how we think, act, and live. Explain how online media and tech devices provide both benefits and detriments, blessings and curses, to a person's life.

Week 2: Instructor Introduction

This week moves from defining character to developing one of the most foundational virtues: **patience**. Students will quickly realize that patience is not just a personality trait but a daily battle. Especially in a culture that honors speed, convenience, and instant gratification, patience is a virtue that must be fought for.

Students will reflect on their own experience with distraction, urgency, and the pressure to satisfy every desire immediately. Whether they are waiting on a text message, enduring boredom, or resisting the urge for easy entertainment, this week helps them recognize how deeply *impatience* has been normalized in their lives.

Using the media example of *The Karate Kid*, students are reminded of a time in human history (not that long ago) when patience was built into the fabric of life. Through the biblical example of Jacob, they will explore how waiting can either strengthen faith and character or expose weaknesses. Because Scripture defines patience as a fruit of the Spirit, rather than a learned behavior, students will be encouraged to deepen their understanding of the Holy Spirit's transformative work.

A critical part of this week's lesson is helping students recognize that their struggle with patience is neither their fault nor accidental. Devices, apps, and games are intentionally designed to remove waiting and maximize engagement. Features such as autoplay, infinite scroll, notifications, and streaks are designed to train us toward immediacy and intolerance for delays.

Finally, students will be challenged to take a practical step toward patience by introducing intentional "friction" to their technology use.

What to Look for:

- Students may minimize impatience as normal and "the way it is." Help them see it is both a spiritual issue and a formed habit.
- Discussion on the flesh vs. Spirit may need clarification. Feel free to use a personal example to show how you've grown through this battle.

Week 2: Patience

REFLECT & JOURNALING

*Each chapter begins with a title page asking the question, "What Makes Us Human?"
These will be your DAY 1 journaling prompt each week.*

How does "anticipation" help define what it means to be human?

In what ways does waiting shape your character? How does technology train you to avoid waiting instead of embracing it?

Week 2: Patience

ENGAGING MEDIA

Watch the original *Karate Kid* movie, or an 80s or 90s sitcom episode such as *The Wonder Years*, *Family Ties*, or *Growing Pains*.

What positive character virtues are displayed?

What aspects of their daily life reveal a sense of patience or lack of demands for time?

Imagine smartphones in the hands of the characters. How would the story change?

Week 2: Patience

ENGAGING MEDIA for deeper reflection:

With your parents or grandparents, listen to The Beatles' *Hey Jude*, Led Zeppelin's *Stairway to Heaven*, or Guns N' Roses' *Patience* all the way through.

Ask them about what it was like to wait for music, television shows, and photos before everything became instant. Listen patiently to their answers.

What kinds of things were they impatient for at your age?

Has today's media and technology diminished their patience? If so, how?

What era of time do they prefer? Then or now? And why?

Week 2: Patience

STUDY / DISCUSSION

Read **Galatians 5:16-17**, **Galatians 5:22-25**, **Romans 8:5-8**, **Romans 8:25**, and **James 5:7-8** and discuss the following questions with parent/grandparent/mentor.

According to these verses, how does God view waiting and patience?

What makes biblical patience different than just “toughing it out”?

How do you see the battle between the flesh and the Spirit in your daily life? *Fill in the columned list to reflect on it visually. The columns don't have to correlate. An example is provided.*

| FLESH | SPIRIT |
|-------------------------------|---|
| <i>Distraction with phone</i> | <i>Remaining hopeful for the future</i> |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |

Week 2: Patience

SHORT ESSAY

Read the following prompt carefully. Take a few minutes to think through its ideas, then write a structured response that explains your reasoning and supports your argument. Responses should be approximately 300-500 words.

Explain how waiting and anticipation help shape a person's character. What happens in the waiting that is beneficial or formative? How does modern media train people to avoid waiting, and what are the consequences of that?

Week 3: Instructor Introduction

Building on the foundation of patience, this week focuses on **respect**. We define this as not merely politeness, but as giving attention and honor to others as image-bearers of God. Students will begin to see that respect is not “keeping your mouth shut” or “obeying authority,” but is demonstrated in where and how they direct their attention.

Students will reflect on the growing reality of being “absently present,” when you are physically near others but mentally and emotionally engaged in the virtual world through devices. The tension between online and in-person presence will encourage them to recognize how easily technology steals attention away from what matters most.

Through the media example of *What Would You Do?* and recent news headlines, students will explore how modern media encourages depersonalization. Using the biblical example of the Good Samaritan, students are reminded of Christ’s command to “love your neighbor as yourself.” Respect is one of the most immediate and practical ways that love is expressed. Students learn that respecting others means noticing them, listening to them, and treating them as valuable rather than as interruptions or annoyances.

Students will be encouraged to think in terms of “embodied presence,” where respect can be demonstrated. At the same time, they must recognize that when people are reduced to usernames, avatars, or content, respect is not as natural. The challenge before them is to recognize how their online experiences shape their real-life attention and respect toward others.

Finally, students will identify one practical step to grow in respect. Suggestions include removing or reducing distractions in moments where others deserve their full attention. **BONUS:** Ask your student how *you* can improve on this and challenge yourselves together.

What to Look for:

- Students may not see distraction as disrespect. Help them connect attention and value (which will be the focus in Week 8).
- Prepare yourself for honest discussions about the lack of respect or attention you, as parents or grandparents, have demonstrated while distracted by devices. Confess and repent.

Week 3: Respect

REFLECT & JOURNALING

*Each chapter begins with a title page asking the question, "What Makes Us Human?"
These will be your DAY 1 journaling prompt each week.*

How does "attention" help define what it means to be human?

What is easier for you: giving attention to others or receiving attention from others, and why? Why do you think it's called "paying" attention?

Week 3: Respect

ENGAGING MEDIA

Watch an episode or YouTube clip of Disney Channel's *Jessie*, *Liv and Maddie*, or *Dog with a Blog*.

How is disrespect for authority and adults used as entertainment?

How does the character's disrespect cause you to feel about them? Would they be someone you would trust?

Do you believe that entertainment like this shaped the respect young people have for others today?

Week 3: Respect

ENGAGING MEDIA for deeper reflection:

Ask your parent or grandparent to sing “Respect” by Aretha Franklin. That part is just for fun, but then ask:

What did respect look like when they were growing up?

How have they witnessed the culture growing less respectful in their lifetime?

How do they practice civil attention? How do they experience others giving them civil attention?

**If they don't know the term “civil attention,” you can teach them something new.*

Week 3: Respect

STUDY / DISCUSSION

Read **Luke 10:25-37**, **Matthew 5:43-48**, and **James 2:15-17** and discuss the following questions with parent/grandparent/mentor.

Loving your neighbors and your enemies often involves risk and a cost. What did the Samaritan man risk? What did it cost him?

When we love despite the risk and cost involved, how are we displaying Christlike character?

What realistic, faith-driven actions can you take to love and respect your neighbor at your age?

Week 3: Respect

SHORT ESSAY

Read the following prompt carefully. Take a few minutes to think through its ideas, then write a structured response that explains your reasoning and supports your argument. Responses should be approximately 300-500 words.

Think about times when an adult in your life was distracted by a phone or device while you were with them. How did that make you feel (frustrated with the person, jealous of their device, or pleased you could do whatever without being noticed)? How does distraction impact relationships?

Week 4: Instructor Introduction

This week shifts from attention (as a form of respect) to action by focusing on **kindness**. This is the virtue that actively seeks the good of others. Students will reflect on their own experiences with unkindness, both online and in person, and begin to recognize how normalized cruelty has become in today's culture.

From comment sections and group chats to crass entertainment and humor, students are immersed in environments where sarcasm, mockery, and hatred are often rewarded with attention. This week helps them step back and see that unkindness is neither harmless nor without consequences. It causes real damage to relationships, reputations, and hearts.

Through the media example of classic Disney movies, students will reflect on how the common story of good vs. evil in children's movies is won through kindness and moral virtue. Through the biblical example of Joseph, students will learn how kindness is more than being nice or avoiding conflict. It is an intentional and often courageous choice to "overcome evil with good."

Practically, students will examine how the structure of online communication (distance, anonymity, and speed) lowers the natural barriers to kindness. Cruelty is easier when it's a profile with a username and avatar rather than an image-bearer of God standing face-to-face with them. This awareness helps students understand that their words, tone, and actions either add to the evil or reflect the transforming work of Christ in their lives.

Concluding this week, students will identify practical, tangible ways to live out kindness in their daily lives. This may include speaking encouragement, refusing to participate in harmful conversations, or stepping in when others are treated poorly.

What to Look for:

- Students may find kindness boring and unkindness the best kind of humor. Help them recognize its real impact.
- Some may feel convicted about past behaviors, while others may feel victimized by others' actions. Help them move toward repentance and/or forgiveness.

Week 4: Kindness

REFLECT & JOURNALING

*Each chapter begins with a title page asking the question, "What Makes Us Human?"
These will be your DAY 1 journaling prompt each week.*

How does "communication" help define what it means to be human?

Describe your ability to verbally communicate with others. How does digital communication shape your opportunities and abilities to communicate?

Week 4: Kindness

ENGAGING MEDIA

Watch a Disney movie all the way through.

Does the script fit the classic model of “protagonist left all alone with a known enemy, a helpful and wise friend, and the triumph over evil”?

Make note of all the ways that kindness, love, and courage are used as weapons to conquer evil.

What character traits does the villain of the story possess? How does his/her character lead to their demise?

Week 4: Kindness

ENGAGING MEDIA

Watch a Disney movie all the way through.

How do you see the gospel reflected in how evil is overcome?

Week 4: Kindness

ENGAGING MEDIA for deeper reflection:

Consider the genre of horror movies. (You do not need to watch one; reflect on the themes you are aware of.)

How do the character traits of the horror villain mimic the nature of Satan in Scripture?

Horror movies rarely portray kindness as powerful. Why do you think this is?

Horror often reflects the anxieties of contemporary culture. What current cultural anxiety could you see made into a horror film?

Week 4: Kindness

STUDY / DISCUSSION

Read **Genesis 45:4-15** and **50:19-21**, **Luke 6:27-36**, and **James 3:6-10** and discuss the following questions with parent/grandparent/mentor.

How could your decision to show kindness instead of acting in anger or revenge change a friendship, a group chat, or your home life?

Jesus teaches you to love your enemies and bless those who hurt you. Even if the relationship doesn't change immediately, how does responding in this counter-cultural way change you for the better?

How are typed words online, in texts, or even unspoken in memes more dangerous and easier to misuse than spoken words?

Week 4: Kindness

SHORT ESSAY

Read the following prompt carefully. Take a few minutes to think through its ideas, then write a structured response that explains your reasoning and supports your argument. Responses should be approximately 300-500 words.

Scripture has much to say about the power of words spoken by the tongue. Today, many of our words are written quickly with our *thumbs*.

How are “words of the tongue” different from “words of the thumb” in what we say, how we say it, and why we say it? What kinds of thoughts or impulses tend to come out more easily when typing than when speaking face-to-face? What impact do those words have on others?

Week 5: Instructor Introduction

This week, we zoom in on **honesty**, with the goal of moving beyond simply telling the truth to understanding what it means to live in truth. Students will reflect on their relationship with truth in both everyday lives and online, recognizing that honesty must also align with reality as God defines it.

Some call our culture “post-truth” because truth is often treated as subjective, flexible, and shaped by personal experience. Through nearly every form of online media, students are regularly exposed to curated realities, filtered or fabricated identities, and persuasive information that may sound true but is not.

Through the media example of *The Truman Show*, students will consider the blurred lines between reality and performance, and the repercussions of living a life curated for others' entertainment. Using the Old Testament account of Daniel, students will reflect on what it looks like to remain truthful and uncompromising in the face of cultural pressure. Choosing not to live by lies requires courage, and students are encouraged to accept the potential cost of truth to glorify God.

This week also emphasizes the blessing and freedom of living truthfully. Scripture teaches that truth leads to clarity, freedom, and a restored relationship with God. Suppressing the truth produces confusion, bondage, and brokenness. Students are reminded of the value of transparency and the necessity of accountability to remain grounded in the truth of reality.

What to Look for:

- The self-audit at the end of the week prompts students to acknowledge habits, compromises, or hidden struggles they have never spoken about. For some, honesty will feel too risky because they fear embarrassment, disappointment, or punishment if the parent reads their responses. Encourage them to be honest before God, to confess and repent. Resist the urge to react in anger or immediate punishment. Honesty and confession are true signs of heart transformation!

Week 5: Honesty

REFLECT & JOURNALING

*Each chapter begins with a title page asking the question, "What Makes Us Human?"
These will be your DAY 1 journaling prompt each week.*

How does "reality" help define what it means to be human?

What are some "truths" of your reality that you cannot change? How does technology tempt you to escape your reality?

Week 5: Honesty

ENGAGING MEDIA

Watch *The Truman Show* or some clips of it on YouTube (especially the ending).

What would you prefer: uncomfortable truth or lies that entertain you?

How would you feel if you found out everyone you knew had lied or hidden the truth from you?

The creator of the show tells Truman, “I know you better than you know yourself.” In many ways, algorithms could say that about you. Why is this dangerous?

Week 5: Honesty

ENGAGING MEDIA

Watch *The Truman Show* or some clips of it on YouTube (especially the ending).

What parts of your life feel filtered, staged, or controlled?

Week 5: Honesty

ENGAGING MEDIA for deeper reflection:

Society loves to be entertained by other people's reality, even if it is a constructed reality. From family vloggers to "get ready with me" videos and reality shows like *Love Island*, all are meant to portray unscripted real life.

How does editing, staging, and selective storytelling shape the "truth" that viewers see?

How can you tell when something is being exaggerated, edited, or staged for views?

How does this kind of media form your understanding about what is true versus what is entertaining?

Week 5: Honesty

STUDY / DISCUSSION

Read **Daniel 1:8** and **6:16-23**, and **Romans 1:18-25** and discuss the following questions with parent/grandparent/mentor.

Daniel lived in Judah during a time of apostasy (turning from God). What was different about Daniel's life that at such a young age, he had the strength of faith to determine not to defile himself? Could you do this today?

Daniel could have prayed with the windows closed to ensure he wasn't caught. Where are you tempted to take less-than-truthful shortcuts to get ahead, gain comfort or convenience, or save your butt?

Based on Romans 1, why is it important to decide now (while you're young, like Daniel) to live honest lives before God; to not suppress the truth with wickedness?

Week 5: Honesty

SHORT ESSAY

Read the following prompt carefully. Take a few minutes to think through its ideas, then write a structured response that explains your reasoning and supports your argument. Responses should be approximately 300-500 words.

Scripture teaches that truth is not something we create, but something we receive from God. At the same time, we now have generative AI that can produce a lot of persuasive content that looks and sounds like truth. What is the difference between knowing the truth revealed in Scripture and receiving information from tools like AI chatbots? What is the danger of AI reliance and how does it shape the way people understand truth, honesty, and responsibility?

Week 6: Instructor Introduction

This week focuses on **self-control**, a virtue Scripture describes as essential to wisdom, maturity, and faithfulness. Students will examine how modern media and technology environments are intentionally designed to weaken self-control by extracting maximum engagement by appealing to impulse, emotion, and immediate gratification.

This week helps students recognize that many of their struggles with distraction, procrastination, anxiety, and a constant need for entertainment are not simply personal weaknesses. They are the predictable results of devices engineered to endlessly stimulate and reward.

Through the media example of *The Bachelor*, students will explore how “constructed reality” environments amplify emotional reactions and encourage impulsive behavior. Through the biblical example of Esther, they will reflect on how self-control is a fruit of the Holy Spirit that enables them to govern impulses, fears, and desires to accomplish God’s will.

This week also emphasizes the relationship between self-control and dependence on God. Students will be encouraged to identify temptations and respond to them not just with more effort, but with prayer and surrender as Jesus did. As a practical exercise, students are challenged to fast from a known temptation for three days while intentionally praying for God’s transformation.

Ultimately, this week helps students see that freedom is not found in having access to indulge in every desire, but in learning to govern desires under the power of the Holy Spirit.

What to Look for:

- Students may initially go all-in and “try hard” to make big changes, only to fail and feel discouraged. Encourage small but intentional acts of obedience while constantly surrendering to the Holy Spirit’s work.
- Some students may become defensive when discussing media or gaming habits and resist change. Remind them of the main goal: for their character to dictate media use rather than have media use shape character.

Week 6: Self-Control

REFLECT & JOURNALING

*Each chapter begins with a title page asking the question, "What Makes Us Human?"
These will be your DAY 1 journaling prompt each week.*

How does "discomfort" help define what it means to be human?

What changes would make your life easier, more comfortable, and pleasurable? What do you think is lost without struggle or discomfort?

Week 6: Self-Control

ENGAGING MEDIA

Watch an episode of a competitive game show such as *Beast Games*, *The Amazing Race*, or *MasterChef Jr.*

Compare the contestants who are calm, respectful, and self-controlled with those who aren't.

Who do you feel drawn to root for? The self-controlled or the emotional mess?

How much does the environment impact a person's self-control?

Week 6: Self-Control

ENGAGING MEDIA for deeper reflection:

Ask your parents or grandparents how they learned self-control growing up.

What tempted them to act impulsively, spend money, or waste time?

What habits or disciplines in their life shaped their ability to stay focused, calm, or obedient even when it was difficult?

Did they ever make decisions from a lack of self-control that they later regretted in life?

Week 6: Self-Control

ENGAGING MEDIA for deeper reflection:

Ask your parents or grandparents how they learned self-control growing up.

What wisdom do they wish young people today understood about self-control?

Week 6: Self-Control

STUDY / DISCUSSION

Read **Esther 2:15-17, 4:4-17 and 5:1-8**, and **Matthew 4:1-11 and 26:41**, and **Proverbs 25:28** and discuss the following questions with parent/grand-parent/mentor.

What parallels/similarities can you draw between Esther's mediated palace reality and the online mediated reality of our day? Based on those parallels, is self-control still possible in our technological age?

If the goal of the Christian life is to be more like Christ every day (to be sanctified), what practical lesson can you take from Jesus' example of resisting temptation? How can you specifically apply Jesus' teaching to one temptation in your life in order to gain self-control this week?

Proverbs 25:28 describes self-control as a protective wall, where, without it, you're vulnerable to attack. What protective walls have *you torn down* in order to have the immediate gratification you desire (or feel you deserve)?

Week 6: Self-Control

SHORT ESSAY

Read the following prompt carefully. Take a few minutes to think through its ideas, then write a structured response that explains your reasoning and supports your argument. Responses should be approximately 300-500 words.

One way to describe self-control is choosing what is right over what is easy or immediately rewarding. Whom do you know who exhibits admirable self-control? Describe their habits and what makes this virtue stand out? What benefit do they experience because of this strength?

Week 7: Instructor Introduction

This week's focus is on **humility**, a virtue that stands in stark contrast to the culture of self-promotion surrounding students every day. Through social media, music, gaming, and advertising, students are constantly encouraged to build themselves, garner attention, promote their personal brand, and seek validation. Students will recognize that under all of this media culture lies a deep spiritual temptation to worship the god of self.

Through the media example of *The Greatest Showman*, students will explore how the pursuit of applause and status can slowly corrupt a person's integrity and relationships. Through the biblical example of Jesus, students will study the experiences of the apostles Paul and Peter, who were broken of their pride and humbled to be more like Christ. By reflecting on Jesus' earthly life and the attributes of God, students will recognize modern-day arrogance and pride as self-worship.

A major emphasis of the week is helping students recognize how online environments intensify the focus on *self*. Likes, views, comments, followers, rankings, curated images, and algorithms all encourage students to think about themselves. There is a constant focus on how they appear, how they compare, and how others perceive them. Left unchecked, this sidetracks sanctification, leaving only anxiety. The remedy is humility: confessing and repenting of self-focus and self-worship.

Students are challenged to (humbly) recognize areas of pride in their lives. They will identify immediate, practical ways to cultivate humility in their everyday lives. These may include serving without recognition, not taking selfies, making a confession, or discontinuing an online activity that promotes self-focus.

What to Look for:

- Talking about humility can inflame pride. Encourage students with the benefits of a proactive, personal humbling rather than being humbled by God.
- Some students may not see attention-seeking behavior or a focus on the self as negative. Listen with grace and point them to Jesus' life in the gospels.
- Humility isn't about being weak or insecure. Help students see that biblical humility is strength surrendered to God's authority.

Week 7: Humility

REFLECT & JOURNALING

*Each chapter begins with a title page asking the question, "What Makes Us Human?"
These will be your DAY 1 journaling prompt each week.*

How does "worship" help define what it means to be human?

What is lost if you only live to build, produce, achieve, and promote yourself? How does looking for (and finding) God's glory in your life shape how you view others?

Week 7: Humility

ENGAGING MEDIA

Watch *The Greatest Showman*. As you watch, reflect on the following questions.

What initial desire motivates Barnum to start the circus?

Where do you see Barnum “using” people rather than loving or serving them?

What values/morals does Barnum compromise as his fame grows?

Week 7: Humility

ENGAGING MEDIA

Watch *The Greatest Showman*. As you watch, reflect on the following questions.

What scenes show a turning point from humility to pride?

How does Barnum model biblical repentance?

Week 7: Humility

ENGAGING MEDIA for deeper reflection:

The circus of the late 1800s was a shared entertainment experience amidst a large audience. Similarly, in the 1900s, the same “big movies” were watched by everyone. Today, entertainment is less of a shared experience. With AI, it is now personalized and tailored to you: social media content, music suggestions, ads, and location-based recommendations. Soon, it will be AI-generated movies and music, uniquely created for you. The shift from shared culture to hyper-personalized worlds trains your heart to believe you are the center.

How does hyper-personalization work against humility, which puts God and others first? How is this spiritually dangerous for Christ followers?

Week 7: Humility

STUDY / DISCUSSION

Read **Philippians 2:3-8** and discuss the following questions with parent/grandparent/mentor.

What are some of the attributes of God? Which attributes does He share with His image-bearers (us) as they are sanctified? (Consider writing their answers on a dry-erase board if available.)

How does Scripture describe Jesus possessing these attributes? What stands out about how Jesus used His power and position?

How does God's view of humility differ from the culture's view of humility?

Week 7: Humility

SHORT ESSAY

Read the following prompt carefully. Take a few minutes to think through its ideas, then write a structured response that explains your reasoning and supports your argument. Responses should be approximately 300-500 words.

While culture celebrates pride and self-promotion, Scripture consistently calls God's people to humility. Choose a Bible verse that teaches humility and reflect on how modern media encourages pride and self-focus. How does your chosen Scripture challenge the way people present themselves or seek attention online? What would online-sharing spaces look like if God's people lived out biblical humility?

Week 8: Instructor Introduction

The final week focuses on self-worth, bringing together many of the themes students have explored throughout the study. They have examined identity, attention, worship, humility, spiritual formation, and virtuous living through the lens of online media and technology. Now, they will consider how today's online attention economy pressures them to measure their value and worth by metrics of visibility, approval, performance, rankings, comparisons, and success.

Through the media example of *The Lord of the Rings*, students will explore how the One Ring symbolizes the corrupting power of attention, control, and misplaced desires. Just as the ring distorts the character of the one who holds it, so can internet-connected devices. With the biblical example of David, students will see the danger of pride and misplaced worth alongside the beauty of repentance.

This week will press students beyond the head-knowledge of finding identity in Christ to a spirit-led action of confession and repentance. Rather than keeping failures, sin struggles, or weaknesses hidden and replacing them with curated perfection, students learn that their worth is not destroyed by confessing sin. Rather, they find freedom in the gift of grace that restores their relationship with God.

Ultimately, this final week directs students away from seeking worth in attention, achievement, appearance, popularity, wealth, or success. Students will be challenged to identify a mature and trustworthy believer who can help them pursue holiness through repentance and accountability.

What to Look for:

- Students often strongly identify with popularity, appearance, talent, and online approval. Patiently and gently, redirect the conversation toward identity in Christ, who does not change.
- Some students may seek an accountability mentor who will make them “happy” instead of holy. Culture offers plenty of “yes-people” who confirm sin. Help your student be discerning in this.
- At this point, students should be demonstrating thoughtfulness and intentionality in their use of online media and technology.

Week 8: Self-Worth

REFLECT & JOURNALING

*Each chapter begins with a title page asking the question, "What Makes Us Human?"
These will be your DAY 1 journaling prompt each week.*

How does "God's image" help define what it means to be human?

What does bearing God's image say about your value? How can online media and technology alter or distort the image you bear?

Week 8: Self-Worth

ENGAGING MEDIA

Watch a scene from *The Lord of the Rings*: either with Frodo and the Ring (*The Return of the King*) or Gollum vs Smeagol (*The Two Towers*). You can find both on YouTube.

What happens when someone makes *the One Ring* their entire source of worth? What about when *attention* becomes the source?

Does the scene make you feel sorry for them for being so corrupted? How do you feel about people online who beg or hustle for likes and follows?

Week 8: Self-Worth

ENGAGING MEDIA for deeper reflection:

If your parents or grandparents have social media accounts, ask them to view their feeds with you for a few minutes.

How many posts are of other people chasing attention? How many sponsored or suggested posts seek to capture their attention?

If you have a social media account, do the same with your feed.

What differences do both of you see between the two feeds?

Do your parents or grandparents view behavior chasing attention differently than you? Why?

Week 8: Self-Worth

STUDY / DISCUSSION

Read **Psalm 62:7**, **Psalm 51:1-5**, **2 Corinthians 5:14-15**, and **Romans 8:1** and discuss the following questions with parent/grandparent/mentor.

Define the words of Psalm 62:7:

- **Salvation**
- **Honor**
- **Mighty Rock**
- **Refuge**

How are these distorted by the attention economy?

Walk through the 2 Corinthians passage. What challenge does Paul give you? Why is it a worthy challenge? What makes the challenge possible? And, practically, why will it be hard?

Why is repentance such an important part of self-worth? What happens when we hide sin instead of confessing it?

Week 8: Self-Worth

SHORT ESSAY

Read the following prompt carefully. Take a few minutes to think through its ideas, then write a structured response that explains your reasoning and supports your argument. Responses should be approximately 300-500 words.

Sin can deplete a person's sense of worth, leaving them feeling *worthless*. Suppose a friend confides in you the hidden sin that has left them broken and hopeless. How would you encourage their repentance by embodying each of the virtues covered in this study? What Scripture would you use to restore hope and worth in Christ's finished work on the cross?

Resources for Parents:

MANAGING MEDIA CREATING CHARACTER

Book and Small Group Curriculum

**Biblical Guides to Popular Apps,
Games, & Trends**

visit braveparenting.net

