

Liking Jesus Viewer Guide Session 2: Restoring Intimacy

Group Discussion:

Take time to talk about what you just watched.

1. What part of the teaching had the most impact on you?

Technology Is Changing Relationships

2. There are many ways in which technology and social media can enhance and support relationships. However, in order to use these tools well, we must also acknowledge the ways in which use or overuse might hurt relationships or distract us from what's most important. Briefly review the list of statements that follow. Place a check mark next to any statements you relate to, or write in your own statement below.

- The more I use social media, the more I crave personal interaction.
- I'm linked to dozens or hundreds of people online, but I often feel detached from interpersonal relationships.
- I sometimes wonder if social media is replacing my relationships more than enhancing them.
- The more I dabble in social media, the more I realize I'm delaying the personal interaction I really want.
- Once when I was going through a difficult time, I was hurt or disappointed that a friend sent me an email, a text, or a comment rather than reaching out for a real conversation.
- Sometimes when I get together with friends, they're so distracted by their phones that I end up feeling more alone than if I'd stayed home by myself.
- I've sometimes ruined or missed out on real-life moments with people I care about by trying to capture, manufacture, or post a social media moment.
- Other: _____

Of the statements you checked, which do you relate to most? Share the reasons for your response.

3. Craig described how the immediate affirmation we get from a social media post could give us a sense of relational connection in the short term, but in reality we might simply be "deferring loneliness." In other words, not only are we not meeting our need for connection, we're deepening and prolonging our isolation.

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- Do you think it's possible to experience face-to-face the kind of immediate affirmation we get from social media responses? Why or why not?

- Briefly compare the experience of affirmation you might get from real-life relationships or face-to-face conversations with the affirmation you get from Likes, retweets, and comments, etc. For example, in what ways might each kind of affirmation address or fail to address loneliness? How is each satisfying or dissatisfying? More or less meaningful? Easier or harder to give?

- Which of the following statements do you resonate with more? Share the reasons for your response.

The experience of immediate affirmation in social media puts unrealistic expectations and pressure on real-time relationships and face-to-face interactions.

The hunger for immediate affirmation in social media is a sign that we need to be more proactive and generous with affirmation in real-time relationships and face-to-face interactions.

4. When it comes to technology and social media, how would you distinguish between the two kinds of control? In other words, at what point does this power to do relationships on our own terms stunt our relational skills or damage our relationships? As part of your response, share any examples you can think of.

- How do you recognize this need to do relationships on our own terms *outside* of technology and social media? For example, how do we tend to give and withhold approval of others, and give or withhold access and information about ourselves in real-time relationships and interactions?

- What, if anything, distinguishes the controlling behaviors we use in real time from those we use with technology and social media?

Practicing the Power of Presence

5. Craig described the power of presence — of spending time together face-to-face and being emotionally engaged. The apostle Paul gives us a picture of what it might look like in practical terms to love people in this way:

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Don't just pretend to love others. Really love them. . . Love each other with genuine affection, and take delight in honoring each other. . . When God's people are in need, be ready to help them. Always be eager to practice hospitality.

(Romans 12:9 – 10, 13 NLT)

For a fresh perspective on this passage, read it again from *The Voice*:

Love others well, and don't hide behind a mask; love authentically. . . Live in true devotion to one another, loving each other as sisters and brothers. Be first to honor others by putting them first. . . Share what you have with the saints, so they lack nothing; take every opportunity to open your life and home to others.

(Romans 12:9 – 10, 13 The Voice)

- Paul describes several actions that elaborate on what it means to “love others well.” As you review the passage, which actions stand out as something you wish you could experience more — either on the giving or the receiving end?
- The fact that you are meeting together for this study is an indication that you are already practicing the power of presence. What would you say is the next challenge for your group? In other words, how can you be even more intentional about being engaged when you are together?