



GEEKS UNDER GRACE

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Ready Player One (2018) | Finding Reality | BIBLE STUDY

Facilitator Note: We encourage facilitators to take this Bible study and expound on it throughout the week, allowing it to be a springboard for deeper conversation and personal meditation.

PRESS START

Life is difficult, and everyone needs a break now and then. In *Ready Player One*, people can escape and relax in the OASIS through sports, adventuring, or even just a vacation. While taking escapism too far can be dangerous, taking small, occasional breaks can help us avoid burn out and be more productive in the long run. **What is your favorite way to relax and take a break?**

EQUIP

Reality and virtual reality are blurred in *Ready Player One*. Characters conduct business, order food, and form relationships inside the virtual world of the OASIS. Their avatars become so much a part of who they are that losing an avatar feels like losing yourself, as is seen in the beginning of the movie where one man tries to commit suicide after zeroing out in the game. The company IOI is willing to go so far as to kill people in real life so they can get ahead in the virtual world.

Halliday, the OASIS creator, was so wrapped up in his virtual world he missed out on real life happening all around him. He lost the only woman he loved and his best friend, all because he was wrapped up in what was not real. Wade lived his entire life in the OASIS. His only friends were people he had never met and his days were spent alone in a van with his visor on.

His shift from a virtual life to a real one was not voluntary, but shoved on him when his home was attacked and then he was kidnapped. From that point on, he was forced to live in both the real world and the virtual one. This shift, though forced, led him to the realization the real world contained what the virtual world could never provide. He connected with people in ways he never had before and learned to fight for something bigger than himself.

Everyone has something they are hiding from. For Wade, it was an unloving aunt and her abusive boyfriends, and a hopelessness of ever getting out of his current situation. His escape was the OASIS. His freedom was when he realized the OASIS was not the solution.

LEVEL UP

As Christians, we have an even greater reality we live in. Christ spent much of his earthly ministry teaching his followers about the kingdom of God. This kingdom is our reality. It is here among us,

brought by Christ when he made it possible for us to become children of God, but it has not yet been fully realized. Our challenge today is living in our world, while keeping our focus on the greater spiritual reality that lies in store for us. Focusing on this life may give us temporary pleasure, but living for God's kingdom will bring eternal rewards.

The OASIS provided immediate distraction from the hardships of reality. Waiting for our eternal reward can be difficult, especially when pleasures and distractions of this world promise us instant relief from whatever we are going through. "Reality is the only thing that is real." This is what Halliday told Wade before leaving him the entire OASIS. He wanted to make sure Wade did not make the same mistakes and have the same regrets he did. He realized too late what he had missed out on by focusing on escaping his fears instead of facing them.

Read Matthew 6:19-34

Matthew 6:33 *Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously, and he will give you everything you need.*

Life is hard. In fact, Paul tells us, *"Yes, and everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution."* Because of this suffering, we are all tempted to worry, but the Bible teaches us a better way. Instead of worrying about this life, we are to focus on God and his kingdom. Our thoughts should be dominated by Christ and following him. If we focus on these things and the reality of a world much bigger than ourselves, then our sufferings here on earth will seem much smaller and manageable.

Once Wade took control of the OASIS, he was given the option of shutting it down permanently, but this was not his choice. Instead he chooses to disable it on certain days so people would have time to interact with the real world. The OASIS was part of their reality, just as this Earth is part of ours. God called us to this Earth to love it, not to ignore it. To neglect the real world is to dishonor its creator, so our aim must be to serve this world we live in by putting our focus on the kingdom that God is bringing.

MOD

Matthew 6 gives several examples of things we often worry about and put before God. **What are the things listed in the chapter? What are some things we could add to that list? What do you personally struggle with putting before God's Kingdom?**

A common phrase Christians use is "We are in the world, but not of the world." **John 17:16** says *"They do not belong to this world any more than I do."* **What does this phrase mean? What does it look like?**

What are some practical ways we can not only focus on God's kingdom, but show his kingdom to those around us this week?

PRAY

Does anyone have anything we need to pray about?

Pray and thank God for taking care of our needs and creating a kingdom where all His children can live with him together. Ask him to help us keep our focus on what really matters, but not neglect the world we live in.

THE NEXT LEVEL

John 17:16-18 *"They do not belong to this world any more than I do. Make them holy by your truth; teach them your world, which is truth. Just as you sent me into the world, I am sending them into the world."*

Romans 12:2 *"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."*

Matthew 7:13-14 *"You can enter God's Kingdom only through the narrow gate. The highway to hell is broad, and its gate is wide for the many who choose that way. But the gateway to life is very narrow and the road is difficult, and only a few ever find it."*

1 Corinthians 15:50 *"What I am saying, dear brothers and sisters, is that our physical bodies cannot inherit the Kingdom of God. These dying bodies cannot inherit what will last forever."*

John 3:5-7 *"Jesus replied, 'I assure you, no one can enter the Kingdom of God without being born of water and the Spirit. Humans can reproduce only human life, but the Holy Spirit gives birth to spiritual life. So don't be surprised when I say, 'you must be born again.'"*

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*Scripture taken from the New Living Translation (NLT).
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