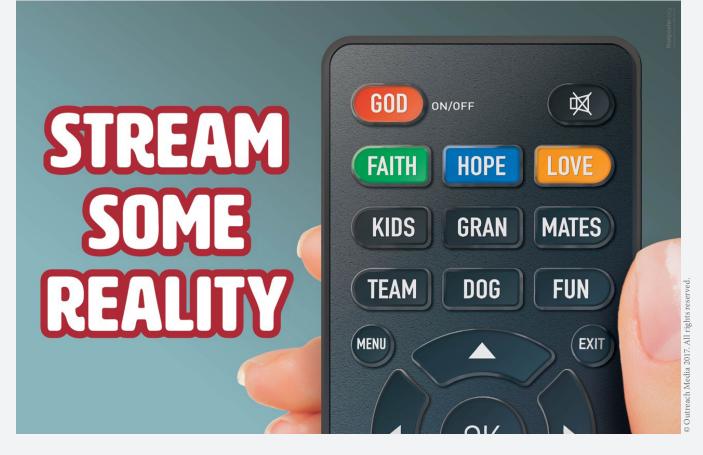
Outreach Notes September 2017

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We're the 'still generation'. Heart rates barely crest the flat line as we flab and sprawl motionless for hours, bingeing on episode after episode... after episode... Most of all we're bingeing on Netflix - consuming huge amounts of data watching 'House of cards' and 'Suits' and 'Stranger Things'. Anything that will take us to 'fiction world' where our pulse can race with fear and love and excitement – somewhere better than our own dreary reality.

Some shows are like the mute button on our lives. They grab us so completely that we're drawn into the very skin of the main character. When our hero sees a threat, we feel their fear. When they see the beautiful girl, we fall in love. When they conquer the world, we feel proud. In 'fiction world' there are always people better than we are... stronger, braver, smarter... good looking. A place with heroes we can pretend to be.

But meanwhile, God is keeping the services running – like sunshine, oxygen, gravity, temperature control and so on – things that sparkle and matter if you take the time to notice. And in God's real world there are urgent responsibilities – to love and care for those around us. Mum, Dad, Gran, the kids, the neighbours... even the dog. The really urgent responsibility though is to spend time with God - someone you can easily forget if you spend all your time online. You see, inside 'fiction world' God barely gets a mention or else he's mocked or taken for granted. But when you turn reality back on – you remember that God is the one in control. It's his reality. He made it and he promises in the Bible that if we draw near to him he'll draw near to us.

Oh, and if you're looking for an exciting superhero – you know, someone who saves the day, then don't look to fiction. In reality, Jesus sets the standard in action heroes. When he arrived amongst us humans he came with a terrifying challenge – to give his life selflessly so that we might live. By dying on the cross, Jesus defeated death making it possible for all people to come close to God. Which means your own reality – dreary or not – can feature the most exciting true story of all.

Prayer: Dear God, in a world full of stories - help me to remember who you are and why your son's story is first in importance.

Bible verse: "Draw near to God and he will draw near to you." James 4:8

