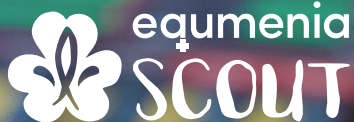




TAKE A MOMENT

A DAILY DETOX FROM SOCIAL MEDIA AND THE RAT RACE

STORIES AND REFLECTIONS



Take a moment: A daily detox from social media and the rat race

Here are eight short stories you can read and discuss with your patrol when you have a few minutes to spare – while waiting to start an activity, when you need to relax for a bit, or when you want to spark a conversation about deeper issues. The stories can thus serve as a resource when you want to work on the first point of the Scout Law.

The stories take 3–5 minutes to read, and then you can discuss them for as long as you like. Each story works by its own, so it doesn't matter if you skip a day or just use some of the stories. If you have extra time, there are optional discussion questions and additional activities to do after each story. If something else in the story sparks a conversation in your patrol, feel free to talk about that instead.

The stories are written to work regardless of what you and your scouts believe in and regardless of whether you come from a secular, Muslim, or Christian background. Each story draws inspiration from a New Testament story, and includes a reference for those who wish to read and compare, but the Bible connection is an extra dimension that you don't have to address unless you want to.

After each story, there are a few questions you can use to guide your discussion, if you'd like. The questions labeled **Reflect** are meant to be brief questions to ponder together, and anyone who wants to share their thoughts aloud is welcome to do so. **Share** is to go around the circle and give everyone in the group a chance to offer a brief reflection. **Discuss** includes questions that are suitable for a slightly longer conversation. For those who want to delve deeper into the biblical text, there is also a Bible reference, a historical question, and a spiritual question to discuss.

Please feel free to send a note to info@equmenia.se if you'd like to share how you used the stories or to offer feedback – whether positive or negative.

Linda Berglund

Scout leader and political journalist

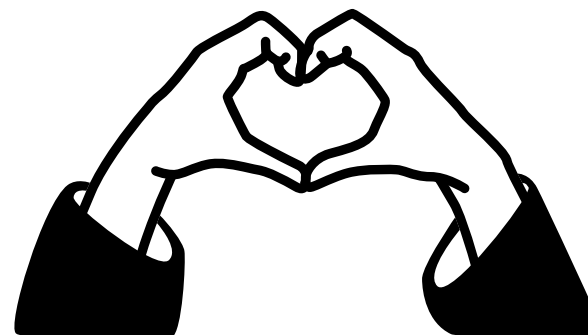
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Episode 1: Kim

– Welcome to Take a Moment, a podcast where people’s personal stories take center stage. My name is John, and I’m your host today. In this episode we’re going to hear Kim’s story. Welcome! The floor is yours.

– Thanks, John. Well, I was just going to grab a coffee downtown on Tuesday. I usually go when there aren’t many other people around. I don’t really like people staring at me because I’m... uh... well, I don’t look like everyone else. As soon as I step outside, it feels like people are staring. Even if no one says anything, I can tell they have... opinions. I know. I shouldn’t care, but it’s hard not to.

Anyway, I went down to the café just after two. By then, the lunch rush is over and my favorite table is usually free – in the corner, where I can see people without anyone staring at me. The girl at the register said hi and asked if I wanted the usual. I nodded.

That’s when things got... weird.

The guy in line behind me suddenly asked, “The usual – what’s that?” “Oh no,” I thought, “another one with an opinion, and who also thinks he has the right to say it out loud!” I mumbled something inaudible in response, took my tray, and walked over to my favorite table.

“Is this seat free?” I suddenly heard someone say. I looked up, and there’s that same guy again, this time with a tray holding the exact same kind of coffee and pastry as me. And now he wanted to sit at my table too. That was pretty much the last thing I wanted, but whatever, I couldn’t bring myself to say no. I nodded, and he sat down and started talking.

And it wasn’t the worst thing I’d ever been through. On the contrary. I was able to tell him a little about what it feels like to be stared at and never quite fit in. To always be in the way and feel strange, inspected, and different.

It was as if he could see past my body and see me, Kim, inside. He asked questions, not as if he wanted to question me and my life, but as if he already understood everything and just wanted to hear me describe it. And when I said something, he didn’t try to interrupt or correct it. He just... listened.

That encounter shifted something in me. I still look the same, but I show up differently. I don’t hide as much, and I speak my mind more often. I haven’t seen him again, but I still think about what he said. In a way, the conversation is still with me.

– Thank you for sharing your story, Kim. You’ve been listening to Take a Moment, a podcast where people’s personal stories take center stage.

REFLECT

- **Reflect:** What image comes to mind when you picture Kim?
- **Reflect:** Is there a time when you should have reached out to someone you saw being left out?
- **Share:** In what ways are you different from others?
- **Disuss:** What can we do in our patrol to ensure no one is left out and everyone is included?

DIG DEEPER

- **Read and compare:** John 4:1-42.
- **Think historically:** In the biblical story, Jesus meets a woman drawing water in the middle of the day, when it’s hottest and she can be sure to be alone. Probably she doesn’t want to talk to anyone else. What do people do today to avoid interacting with others?
- **Think spiritually:** In the biblical story, Jesus impresses the woman by knowing things about her life that no one has told him. Are there things in your life that no one knows about?

Episode 2: Lisa

– Welcome to Take a Moment, a podcast where people’s personal stories take center stage. My name is Mark, and I’m your host today. Today we’re going to hear Lisa’s story. Welcome! The floor is yours.

– Thanks, Mark! This happened one day when Mom and I were out grocery shopping. Since Dad died, shopping has been a bit... different, a little more complicated. Not because we don’t know what to buy – it’s the usual things that everyone buys: rice, pasta, potatoes, carrots, peas, beans...

It’s more that we always have to keep track of what everything costs, just to make sure the money lasts. I still remember that one time we miscalculated and put too much in the cart. It was so embarrassing! It was the day before the financial support came in, so we had to go back and return a can of corn we couldn’t afford.

Once we’re through the checkout, though, the fun part begins: seeing what change we have left and what that might get us from the little shop by the entrance, where drinks and snacks are sold. Usually we each get an apple, which is really nice. Sometimes we buy a small chocolate bar to share. Once this summer, we even had enough for an ice cream each.

But this time we only had two crowns left, and there’s nothing in the little shop that costs that little. My grandpa told me that when he was little, you could buy two sweets for one crown. Today, there’s only bulk candy. So that was a bit of a disappointment. There’s really nothing you can do with two crowns.

When we came out of the store, there was a woman from the Salvation Army standing there with a collection box. And then Mom said there actually is something you can do with two crowns – you can give them to someone who needs them more! I agreed. We’ve eaten at the Salvation Army sometimes, and there’s often people there who don’t have anywhere to live. They get the same soup and bread as we do, which I think is nice. So we walked over and put our two crowns in the collection box.

Just as we did that, we suddenly heard cheering behind us. At first, we thought that someone had scored in a game somewhere. But when

we turned around, there was a bearded man and a group of teenagers standing there – cheering for us! They looked genuinely happy.

The man pointed at us and said that we were real good role models. He said it’s not a big deal to give away money when you have plenty in your bank account and mutual funds, but to give your last few coins – that means something. That’s putting others before yourself.

I don’t know how he could know that we’re short on money. But he turned to one of the guys in the group – Levi – and asked if he would treat us and the whole group to the pizzeria next door. And Levi did just that.

– Thanks for your story, Lisa. This was an episode of Take a Moment, a podcast where people’s personal stories take center stage.

REFLECT

- **Reflect:** What’s the cheapest thing you could buy that you’d actually like to have?
- **Reflect:** Do Lisa and her mom have more money than your family, or less?
- **Share:** Have you ever been short on money? What couldn’t you buy at that time?
- **Discuss:** What can we do in our scout group to make sure everyone can afford to go on hikes and camps?

DIG DEEPER

- **Read and compare:** Mark 12:41–44.
- **Think historically:** Imagine living as a slave in a Roman household two thousand years ago. You own nothing – in fact, you’re owned by someone else. Still, you have a place to sleep and enough food each day. Now imagine someone you know who is free but poor, and sometimes goes without food when work is scarce. Would you be willing to give your food to your poor friend one day?
- **Think spiritually:** In the biblical story, it’s clear that many people give large sums of money to be seen and recognized, but the widow gives so little that no one notices – except Jesus. What about us? Why do we give money?

Episode 3: Hani

– Welcome to Take a Moment, a podcast where people’s personal stories take center stage. My name is Mark, and I’m your host today. In this episode, we’ll hear Hani’s story. Welcome, the floor is yours.

– Hi, my name is Hani and I live in Tyresö just outside of Stockholm. I’ve lived there my whole life, but my parents are from Syria, and my grandfather was a Palestinian refugee. I never really thought much about it. But a few years ago I started at a new school. There were some people there who didn’t like Syrians or Palestinians. They started calling me mean things and telling me to go back to Syria ... or Gaza.

At first, I argued. I told them I was Swedish, that I’d never even lived in Syria. But they didn’t stop. After a while, it just got harder and harder having to see them every single day. In the end, I just stopped going to school.

I thought more would happen when I refused to go. At first the school tried. They sent books home, called for meetings with my parents, and tried setting up distance learning. But nothing really worked. My parents didn’t have the heart to force me when they saw how I was feeling. Mom called a place called BUP (Child and Adolescent Psychiatry), but there was a waiting list. Several months long.

So, time just... passed. I watched TV, YouTube, things like that. I didn’t want to check social media. People from my class had posted that it was good I was gone – that I should go back to Syria or Gaza. At first, I still went outside sometimes, to the little forest nearby, or just out on the street or in the courtyard. But after a while, I stopped doing that too. It felt like it was too much just to open the front door.

Then one day, when Mom came home, she brought a bearded guy with her. And she looked... hopeful, somehow. I thought maybe he was from BUP, like they’d finally gotten through. But he laughed and said he was from somewhere else entirely. And in some way, he was easy to talk to.

What felt completely impossible at the start became easier, little by little. It was like defrosting a freezer. At first, everything is frozen solid, stuck. But then it starts to loosen. Water begins to drip. And eventually, you can just wipe it all away with a cloth, and it’s clean again.

We’ve kept meeting once a week. And I can text him whenever I want. I’ve been back at school for a few weeks now. I’m still behind in a few subjects, but it feels good anyway. And if someone looks like they’re about to say something mean, I just give them a look, and they usually back off. And it doesn’t matter if they were going to say it to me or to someone else.

– Thank you for sharing, Hani. This was an episode of Take a Moment, a podcast where people’s personal stories take center stage.

REFLECT

- **Reflect:** Have you ever been called a bad name? How did that make you feel?
- **Reflect:** Has anyone in your class stopped coming to school? What happened then?
- **Share:** Have you ever had a morning when you didn’t want to go to school? Why?
- **Discuss:** What can you do when even the most routine things feel completely impossible to do?

DIG DEEPER

- **Read and compare:** Mark 7:24–30.
- **Think historically:** In ancient texts, it’s common for people to be described as possessed by evil spirits when today we would say they have an illness or are suffering from mental health issues. Do we think differently about problems if we use different words for them?
- **Think spiritually:** Sometimes Christians pray for Jesus to heal someone who is sick. How can we support and pray for someone suffering from mental health issues?

Episode 4: Niko

Welcome to Take a Moment, a podcast where people's personal stories take center stage. My name is John, and I'm your host. Today we're going to hear Niko's story. Welcome, the floor is yours.

– I'm going to talk about... well, I'm sorry, but this is still a bit difficult. I still get so really angry when I think about it, even though it was several years ago.

Anyway, I used to be a Member of Parliament. A politician. That was my job. Serving in Parliament is a great honor, and you're there because many people in your party trust you. And for it to work, we have to coordinate our positions and stand together. Sometimes we have completely different views on an issue even within the party. Then, we discuss, argue, sometimes for a long time. But when it's time to vote, we fall in line. That's just how it works. We argue within the party, but present a united front to everyone else.

But this time, I couldn't get in line. My views were too different from the rest of the party, and the others wouldn't listen to me at all. And it was a serious issue – a terrible proposal that would have major consequences for many people. People who had lived here for a long time, learned the language, gotten a good education, built a life – and now would be forced out of the country. I couldn't go along with that.

The issue kept coming back. People become more and more fixed in their positions. And it was clear where things were heading. Only a few of us in Parliament were opposed, and most of them from parties I normally wouldn't agree with at all.

Late one evening, as the vote was getting closer, I mustered my courage and decided to reach out to one of the others. In secret. One of those who belonged to another party. I wanted to hear her perspective and find out if she saw any other way forward besides simply voting no. No one was supposed to know I was there. But of course a reporter found out and wrote about it in the newspaper. The whole party found out, and it certainly wasn't popular!

We both got a lot of angry comments. We were called disloyal

troublemakers who didn't respect party decisions. I was even called in by the Chief Whip, the person responsible for keeping us in line, who scolded me and told me keep my opinions to myself and keep a united front. That wasn't pleasant.

In the end, things turned out the way most people wanted, even though we stood our ground and voted no. I wasn't very popular in the party after that. But didn't plan to serve another term anyway, so it was okay.

I really paid the price for standing out, and the scolding still stings. But I'm still convinced that the proposal was wrong, and I have decided that it was worth it to stand up for what I believe is right. Even if I had to do it alone.

– Thank you for sharing, Niko. This was an episode of Take a Moment, a podcast where people's personal stories take center stage.

REFLECT

- **Reflect:** How does it feel when you think differently than everyone else?
- **Reflect:** What's more important? To speak your mind, or to blend in?
- **Share:** Have you ever been the only one with a certain opinion? What did you do then?
- **Discuss:** What can we do in our patrol to ensure everyone feels safe to speak their mind and have a say?

DIG DEEPER

- **Read and compare:** John 3:1–21, 7:45–52; 19:38–42.
- **Think historically:** Nicodemus sat on the Sanhedrin in Jerusalem, and was quite alone there in thinking that Jesus might be worth listening to. Later, the Sanhedrin took up the question of sentencing Jesus to death. What would you have done in that situation, if you had been Nicodemus?
- **Think spiritually:** How do you know whether you are right or wrong if you have a strong inner conviction, but everyone else is against you?

Episode 5: Levi

Welcome to Take a Moment, a podcast where people's personal stories take center stage. My name is Luke, and I'm your host today. This time, we're going to hear Levi's story. Welcome, the floor is yours.

– I... I'm the worst person in the world. Or I used to be. You have no idea what I was up to.

You know, you can get money from the government, the municipality, the Social Insurance Agency, and the Board of Student Finance for various things. Grants, subsidies, student grants, and things like that. Money. I helped people apply for and get that kind of money. Sometimes it was legit stuff they could have applied for and gotten money for themselves if they'd thought of it, sometimes it was pure fake. Stuff that I and they just made up. Pure fraud, basically. Money always came in when I applied for it.

And then I always took a third of all the money as my cut. No matter how much it was.

I made a crazy amount of money off of this. And it was often people who didn't have much themselves, those are often the ones the state and the municipality want to give grants to, so I made sure to find people like that to help. And they were happy to get something even if I took my cut. And I could buy designer clothes and expensive watches and gold chains and all that bling-bling.

Then the rumors started spreading. People began to figure out what I was doing and how I could have so much money. I got beaten up a few times and had to bring some big guys along for protection when I went out on the town. I'm pretty small myself, so otherwise people wouldn't be afraid to pick on me. If I went to the right places, I'd of course find people who were impressed by what I was doing, but often everyone was grumpy and full of... contempt, sort of. Even those who never said anything.

Until I met that guy. The one everyone's talking about these days. With the beard. In town. He just walked up to me one day, looking happy and relaxed. Not at all like everyone else who knew who I was. He wanted to come over to my place for coffee, he said. As if anyone would want to hang out with me, you know? Without talking business, I mean.

He made me rethink things. Now I'm trying to find the people I scammed and give them their money back. Especially those who ended up with the Enforcement Authority because they couldn't pay back the money when my fraud was discovered. It feels like my responsibility to pay those debts. With interest and everything.

– Thanks for sharing your story, Levi. This was an episode of Take a Moment, a podcast where people's personal stories take center stage.

REFLECT

- **Reflect:** Have you ever been cheated out of money?
- **Reflect:** What's the worst thing you've ever done?
- **Share:** Have you ever tried to cheat someone?
- **Discuss:** If someone cheats you out of money, can you still be friends afterward?

DIG DEEPER

- **Read and compare:** Luke 19:1–10.
- **Think historically:** Jewish tax collectors like Levi and Zacchaeus were despised not only because they made money by collecting more in customs duties and taxes than they paid on to the Romans, but even more so because they betrayed their people and collaborated with the enemy. Are there any people who are just as despised in your country today? Why?
- **Think spiritually:** Zacchaeus and Levi are transformed by Jesus' warm and generous welcome, without condemnation. That is what we call grace. What would be grace for you?

Episode 6: Cephas

Welcome to Take a Moment, a podcast where people's personal stories take center stage. I'm your host today, and my name is Mark. Today we're going to hear Cephas's story. Welcome! The floor is yours.

– Yeah, I'm going to tell you about... when I ruined my life, and how my best friend gave it back to me.

It started with that dude who tricked me. He was willing to pay so well for such simple things. Five hundred crowns, a thousand crowns, three thousand crowns. Pick up an envelope from someone and drop it off for him. Pick up a box here and drop it off there. Find out the door code for this or that building. It was such easy money, so I did one thing after another.

That's when everything went wrong. I promise, I was just supposed to put that thermos in the stairwell at that address and walk away. I DIDN'T KNOW IT WAS GOING TO EXPLODE, I promise!

But when it did, some people saw me... saw us, me and my best friend, who was waiting on the other side of the street as I went in with the thermos. We got caught, and he just... even though he didn't know what I was going to do, had never been involved in any of the other jobs, and definitely hadn't gotten any of the money... He just took the blame for everything. Said he was the one who'd received the thermos, that he was supposed to get five thousand for the job, and that he'd left it there in the stairwell.

I sat just outside while the police was questioning him, and I was shaking with fear that he'd spill the beans and rat me out. But in some way, I sensed he'd made up his mind. Decided to take the blame and let me go free.

Do you know what was the worst part of it all? When a police officer came over and gave me a Coke and asked if we were friends, him and me. If I'd noticed what he was up to, if I knew anything. Then I just said, "I don't know that guy. We've never hung out. I barely even know his name."

My best friend was sitting there giving everything for me, and I didn't even want to admit that I knew him!

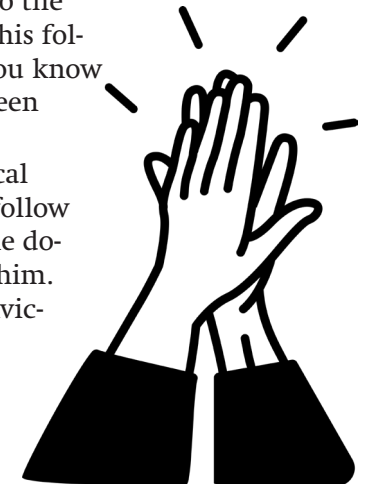
– Thank you for sharing your story, Cephas. This was an episode of Take a Moment, a podcast where people's personal stories take center stage.

REFLECT

- **Reflect:** How does this story make you feel?
- **Reflect:** Could someone have deceived you in the same way they deceived Cephas?
- **Share:** Have there been any explosions or shootings near where you live?
- **Discuss:** If you had done something really bad, would you have wanted to face the punishment, or would you have preferred that your best friend took the blame?

DIG DEEPER

- **Read and compare:** Mark 14:53–72.
- **Think historically:** The reason the Romans want to arrest and kill Jesus is that he threatens Roman power by speaking of the Kingdom of God as an alternative to the Roman Empire. This gets him and his followers regarded as terrorists. Do you know of any country where it is or has been illegal to become a Christian?
- **Think theologically:** In the biblical story, Peter has left everything to follow Jesus, but when Jesus is arrested, he doesn't dare to admit that he knows him. Do we dare to stand up for our convictions when we face opposition?



Episode 7: Lo

Welcome to Take a Moment, a podcast where people's personal stories take center stage. I'm your host today, and my name is Luke. Today we're going to hear Lo's story. Welcome! The mic is yours.

– Thanks! So, this happened when my friend Em and I were on our way home from the music festival Way Out West. We'd been looking forward to the festival all year, and we were so incredibly excited! I just love Zara Larsson, and Em had been longing to finally see The Cure in a live performance. And then, of course, there was the big headliner, the main act, the top artist everyone was buzzing about and who was supposed to be the absolute highlight of the festival.

But as you've all heard... he just canceled. The highlight never happened. He just didn't show up. And the explanations that came out on Instagram honestly felt pretty weak. Nothing that really justified him being a no-show and abandoning all his fans. As if it was just something he said to have something to say, but that actually had nothing to do with why he canceled.

Don't get me wrong, it was still three amazing days, with concerts, crowds, new faces... Amazing in so many ways. But it really stung that all the anticipation, all the plans, the great highlight we'd built up to just... fell apart, fizzled out, ended in nothing.

As we sat in the bistro on the train, grumbling about all the divas and other selfish artists in the world, a man walked by. He asked if there was a seat available at our table. And he was wearing a Way Out West T-shirt, so it was clear he was on his way home from the same festival.

He asked what we were talking about, and when we rolled our eyes and mentioned the artist who had canceled, he wondered what we meant and didn't seem down at all. He seemed to have missed the whole shebang. How was that even possible, if he'd been at the same festival as us?

Then he started talking. He said there had been rumors for some time that the headliner wouldn't show up. That things don't always go as planned. And in certain situations, like if someone in the band had lost someone very important, it's just not worth trying to find a replacement because the show must go on. It's just not worth it.

He asked what gigs we'd seen that actually did take place, and we started sharing memories. The more we talked, the more crazy stuff we remembered. After he got off a few stops before us, we kept talking about memories from festivals, concerts, and gigs. No sad events this time, just the fun stuff. Absolutely amazing memories, actually.

Meeting him made all the difference. He helped us let go of our disappointment over the headliner who never showed up and focus on all that was good instead. Now we've come to realize that it actually turned out to be a really great festival when you think about it. We're already looking forward to the next one!

There's just one thing that bothers me. The man we met on the train... We never got his name, but he reminded me of someone, some famous artist. I still can't figure out who.

– Thanks for your story, Lo. This was an episode of Take a Moment, a podcast where people's personal stories take center stage.

REFLECT

- **Reflect:** Have you experienced a disappointment like the one Lo describes?
- **Reflect:** How do you feel when something fun doesn't turn out the way you expected?
- **Share:** Share a story of a time when you were disappointed.
- **Discuss:** What is the most important thing about a festival or a jamboree? The program, the community, or something else?

DIG DEEPER

- **Read and compare:** Luke 24:13–35.
- **Think historically:** Before cell phones, TV, and printing presses, news spread slowly, but Jerusalem was quite small, and wasn't the execution of Jesus a major event? Is it reasonable to have been in Jerusalem while Jesus was crucified and not have heard about it?
- **Think spiritually:** In the biblical story, Jesus gets the disciples to recognize him in texts from the Hebrew Bible (Old Testament), which were written long before he was born. Do you know of any text in the Hebrew Bible that can be read as referring to Jesus?

Episode 8: Milton

Welcome to Take a Moment, a podcast where people's personal stories take center stage. My name is Luke, and I'm your host today. Today we're going to hear Milton's story. Welcome! The floor is yours.

– I... I'm going to tell you about when I met my worst enemy. Yes, you've all heard of him, and noticed how he suddenly popped up in everyone's feeds. Reels, stories, the occasional podcast...

They say he's talked to lonely people and shut-ins. Got an embezzler to hand out his money and treat people to pizza. And even taken someone else's punishment upon himself. A guy like that simply doesn't exist. You'd almost think he could walk on water and raise the dead!

For a while, I thought I was the only one who saw through it. That it was all fake. Made up. With AI-generated images featuring that ugly beard. Nothing to do with reality. But I soon found others online who agreed. Of course, we shared each other's posts about how stupid and gullible everyone was who believed these stories.

I gained a lot of new followers during that time. At some point, I might have said something along the lines of how people who fall for this kind of fake stuff deserve a punch in the face, or that they shouldn't be allowed to be alive. And maybe that wasn't the best idea, because once, a few of them got beaten up when they ran into some of my followers. I won't deny that.

But one morning... well, it probably wasn't particularly early, as I'd been up all night editing a video about how fake these stories are, instead of getting any sleep. I woke up to the doorbell ringing, and when I opened the door, the sun was already high in the sky. It was uncomfortably bright outside, and hard to see who it was.

But it was him standing there outside. He asked, "Milton, why are you persecuting me? Can I come in and talk? I brought coffee and some pastries."

I'd been pretty preoccupied with this guy for quite a while, and felt like some kind of expert on him. But to meet him face to face and see who he really is was something else entirely. After that cup of coffee, I don't think the same way about him anymore.

– Thanks for sharing this, Milton. You've been listening to Take a Moment, a podcast where people's personal stories take center stage.

REFLECT

- **Reflect:** Do you see stuff on social media that you think is fake?
- **Reflect:** What do you do when someone in your feed says something you absolutely disagree with?
- **Share:** What fake news have you seen online?
- **Discuss:** Is it possible to understand someone who has entirely different beliefs than you?

DIG DEEPER

- **Read and compare:** Acts 8:1–3, 9:1–5, 22:4–8.
- **Think historically:** In ancient times, religious intolerance was quite brutal. Anyone who stopped sacrificing to the Roman gods could be imprisoned and executed for it, and in the biblical account, Paul tries to have as many Christians as possible imprisoned and killed before they spread their faith to too many Jews. What do similar problems look like today?
- **Think spiritually:** When Paul encounters Jesus, he completely changes his view of him and begins to preach the Christian faith instead of persecuting Christians. Is there anything in our lives from which we should repent?

