

T H E OVERCOMING LIFE

Overcoming Comparison Jimmy Evans

Focus Negative comparison is unhealthy because it produces thoughts and feelings about God, ourselves, and others that are inaccurate, counterproductive, and even destructive. Through this message we learn not only the curse, considerations, and causes of comparison but also the cure for comparison.

Fun Did you know there's a Dance Like a Chicken Day and a National Sea Monkey Day? What is the most interesting celebration you have ever heard of?

Review Key Scriptures: John 21:15–24

1. The Curse of Comparison

Comparison produces arrogance, focus issues, mistrust of God and offense at Him, resentment and rejection of others, a false portrayal of oneself, and an open door for the devil to work.

2. Considerations Concerning Comparison

We are all gifted differently with the ability to impact and influence in unique ways. Additionally, each gifting comes with its own levels of blessings and responsibility.

3. Causes of Comparison

Fundamentally, each cause is rooted in either our understanding of who God is and what He says about us, how we love others, or our desire to have what we do not have.

4. Curing Comparison

We can cure a spirit of comparison by thanking God for who He created us to be and accepting ourselves. We also need to trust Him with our needs, desires, and other people. And we must be willing to bless others.

Group Dynamics Idea May can be a busy month. Start planning for a beginning-of-summer and end-of-group gathering. You could schedule a potluck, barbecue, or restaurant get-together.

Discuss

1. Often, it's easiest to identify a tree by its fruit. Spend time considering these questions:
 - Am I producing the fruit of comparison?
 - In what ways have I been arrogant or insecure?
 - Am I focused on performance issues?
 - Do I feel God missed me when He handed out specific gifts?
 - Do I have difficulty celebrating the blessings of others?
 - Am I pretending to have a gift or calling I do not have?
 - Do I find myself envious of others?
2. Read 1 Corinthians 12:12–27. What does Paul compare us to? As parts of the body, do we all have the same function? Why not? How does this relate to comparison?
3. When we judge someone by their pictures and posts on social media, what are we missing? Are we willing to have the success of others *and* the responsibility and pain that comes with their success?
4. In Jeremiah 17:5–8, who is blessed, and who is cursed? Where do we need to receive our identity? Name one of the ways God has gifted you. How can God use this gift for the body of Christ?
5. How are you comparing and not trusting God with who He created you to be? Repent now and thank God for how He created you uniquely.

Take Home As we conclude, remember the following:

- Positive comparison is inspirational, but bad comparison is demoralizing and tormenting.
- When I am focused on comparing myself to others, I am not serving God, and I am in the flesh.
- Psalm 139 reminds me that I am made uniquely for a specific purpose.
- If we love someone, we want good for them; if you don't love them, you resent when something good happens to them.

- To cure comparison, you need to spend time each day thanking God, trusting Him, and celebrating others.

Prayer

Lord, thank You for showing me ways I compare negatively. I desire to trust You with the way You've created me and the journey You have for me. Thank You for the blessings You have given me. I trust You with my needs and desires and my future. Lord, I will bless and encourage others as You work in their lives. In Jesus' name, Amen.

New Leader Tip It's never too early to ask the Lord if He's calling you to lead a group for the next semester. As we near the end of this semester, ask Him for clear wisdom about your part in groups for the fall.