

Icebreaker: What is one thing you think you are pretty good at? What is one thing you would like to get better at?

Key Verse: *We do not dare to classify or compare ourselves with some who commend themselves. When they measure themselves by themselves and compare themselves with themselves, they are not wise.*

2 Corinthians 11:12

In first century Corinth, Paul was battling false apostles. "Apostle" was not a title that someone could give to oneself; one must be given the title by Christ Himself. Apostles had a unique role in the early church, fulfilling the role of prophets in the Old Covenant. One of the obvious problems with these false apostles is that they compared everyone else to themselves. They set the standard of what was good and proper in ministry. Because they did not see the wisdom in looking outside themselves, Paul labeled them as foolish.

Today most of us have the opposite problem of these false apostles. Instead of comparing everyone else to ourselves, we compare ourselves to everyone else. We look at what our friends and coworkers have and think what we have is not enough. This also shows a lack of wisdom.

The comparison at play with both the false apostles and modern men fails because we should never compare ourselves with other people. People are not the standard of comparison; Christ is. When Jesus becomes our standard, two things happen. First, we recognize that we can never live up to the standard that Jesus did. We are all sinful and fall woefully short. Second, we realize that by grace we are accepted and loved by the God whose standard we could never meet. Freedom comes when we are not fixated on what others have but on what we have been given in Jesus Christ.

THINK IT OVER >>>

Thinking back on Dwight's message, what stood out to you?

Why does comparing ourselves with other people show a lack of wisdom on our part?

Why is comparison ultimately a trap for your soul and a snare of the devil?

In 2 Corinthians 10:13, Paul says that instead of comparing, he boasts in the Lord. How does boasting in what the Lord does quiet the voice of comparison?

Dwight told us to ask ourselves these questions:

- Am I fatigued from trying to keep up?
- Am I financially strapped from trying to keep up?
- Am I enjoying or pressuring my kids?
- Am I allowing what others have to keep me from enjoying what I have?
- Does my spouse feel I don't enjoy him/her because I compare him/her?
- Is there someone you secretly wish would fail?

LOOK IT OVER >>>

What are you thankful for? How does expressing thanksgiving squelch comparison?

How can you appreciate the gifting and talents of others instead of comparing yourself to them?

In what areas do you most often compare yourself to others? Why are these areas particularly troubling to you? What can you do to avoid comparison here?

What goals can you set to focus on yourself and your walk with Christ instead of comparing yourself to other people?

NEXT STEPS

This week, consider taking some next steps together, as a group:

1. Pray that God would protect you from comparing yourself to other people. Ask that He would give you a heart that seeks to boast in Him alone and looks for the approval of God more than the approval of men. Praise Him for the way He has made, gifted, and blessed you.
2. Make a list of things to be thankful for as a group. Work through your families, what is going well, and think about all the Lord is doing in, through, and for you. When you see all these blessings together, do we have anything to compare?

EVALUATION/ACTION

Being thankful for what God has given me

Rate yourself from 1 to 10 1 (never), 10 (always)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Why did you give yourself this rating?										
What benefits will you obtain by raising your rating?										
Do you know someone who demonstrates this bottom line well? What do you admire about that person?										
What specific action can you put into practice to raise your rating?										
At the end of this week, reflect - where did you see the bottom line show up in your actions throughout the week?										

PRAYER

List group members and their prayer requests for this week:

FURTHER STUDY

Want to dig deeper? Check out these verses:

- Genesis 4:3-9
- Romans 8:18
- Galatians 6:4
- 1 Corinthians 13:4
- 1 Thessalonians 4:11-12
- Proverbs 14:30

Don't let the conversation stop here. Keep talking it over with others throughout the week.
(Don't forget to bring this paper to the next small group meeting)