

Run Your Own Race

When people compare themselves with others, they follow one of two unhealthy paths:

- elevating themselves above others, including tearing someone down to make themselves look better, or
- thinking poorly about themselves.

Neither honors God. Both paths are unhealthy and divert people from being what God intended them to be. This second devotion in the Comparing Ourselves series speaks to "looking in the mirror" and "not liking what we see." We tend to envy what others have instead of appreciating how God made us. There are hundreds of attributes of others we are tempted to covet. Yet, the 9th & 10 Commandments tell us not to covet. Instead, God wants us to be content with what we have.

Pastor Elliott reminded us (in a January 15th sermon) that contentment ends when we compare ourselves with others. As contentment ends, we are no longer satisfied with the journey God has placed us on. As a result, we lose sight of what Jesus is calling and is equipping us to do. Ask yourself: how do you think God looks at you? God is not concerned with what you have. Instead, He looks at your heart. God is the only one qualified to measure a person's worth, and he does it by looking at your heart for helping others. He looks for people who follow Him and utilize the gifts that He grants to be a blessing to others. Just as a parent loves their children unconditionally and wants the best for them, God looks at you as His creation and loves you unconditionally. In the Book of Psalms, David tells us, "*I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well*" (Psalm 139:14). There are several elements to this verse: (1) praising God; (2) identifying that we are wonderfully made, and (3) acknowledging that we are aware that we are God's creation.



One of my favorite Bible verses is in Philippians. *I can do all this through him who gives me strength* (Philippians 4:13). It sounds like a battle cry to overcome obstacles, but it was intended for a different purpose. The preceding verse says, *I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want*" (Phil 4:12). Instead of being merely courageous the verse is about contentment because of God's strength, not ours. God's strength is far greater than ours. We can be content because Jesus gives us all we need to be successful on the journey He planned for us.

No two people are alike. The beauty of our uniqueness is that we are each differently made for a different journey in life. No two journeys are the same. Develop the skills and interests God has instilled in you as He prepares you for your journey. There is no fulfillment of purpose if we are jealous of others. Run your own race and focus on Jesus and on following Him.

I loved the scene from the Chosen when Jesus came upon a man who had been crippled for 38 years. The man sat every day next to a healing pool. He had been told that if he were the first into the healing pool, he would

be able to walk again. For 38 years he sat near the pool, wallowing in his own sorrows and never first in the pool. He continually compared his situation to that of others. Yet, because of the man's physical condition, others always beat him to the pool. Jesus looked at the man and said, "*You don't need this pool. You need me.*" It is a great lesson. We don't need what others may have. We just need Jesus. Trust Him, and He will enable you to be everything you were intended to be.

Here's the Point: Seek to be the person God intended you to be. You are on a different journey than anyone else. Don't try to copy others. God has other plans for them, and He is equipping you for your own success. Trust in Jesus. As Jesus said, "you just need me."

Closing Prayer: Dear Jesus. We look around and see others who, we think, are more talented or better equipped than us. Help us to know that we are on a different journey than anyone else, and that you equip us for success on our journey. Amen.