



GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

Despite our best efforts, sometimes we can't help but compare ourselves or our lives to those around us. We get caught up looking at others to see how we measure up. This is not only frustrating, exhausting, and depressing—it can cause real harm.

Jesus doesn't want us caught up in a comparison cycle. Jesus has something better in mind.

This guide is designed for individual or group use. Sermons in this series are available at MiddletownChristian.org/Sermons.

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August 14, 2022: Week One

Key Scriptures: Ecclesiastes 4:4-7, Proverbs 14:30

Have you ever wished your life was better? While there can be some good reasons for feeling that way, sometimes the desire for a better life can get us caught in a cycle of comparing ourselves with others, feeling like we'll never measure up, and making choices that may ultimately lead to more harm than good.

Discussion Questions:

1. In what ways do you struggle with thinking that other people have a better life than you?
2. With whom are you trying to keep up? Why? How does the effort to keep up leave you feeling?
3. Share an example of when you have spent more money than you probably should have to do something or buy something to make your life better?
4. Does wanting what other people have prevent you from fully enjoying what you have? For example, you have a very nice car that is reliable, safe, and comfortable, but someone else has a car that is newer, with fewer miles, leather seats, and more luxury features. Or, after visiting someone's home, yours just seems smaller, plainer, or not as nice. What is behind those feelings?
5. Have you ever secretly taken joy in someone else's failure or hoped someone else would not succeed? Why do you think those feelings exist in you?

August 21, 2022: Week Two

Key Scripture: Galatians 4:4-6

When we measure our lives against other people's lives, it can be easy to feel like everyone else has it better. The Good News is that our faith offers a far better mirror through which we can see ourselves.

Discussion Questions:

1. Toward the beginning of his message, Brian asked, Who are you using as a reference point to tell you that you are okay?
 - a. What does he mean by that question?
 - b. What is your answer to the question?

2. Brian uses Galatians 4:1 to define the word redemption. In your own words, what does that mean?

3. Moving to the next verse, we learn that at the heart of our redemption is a very intimate relationship with God. Paul describes that relationship by pointing to Jesus' use of the word "abba" to describe God.
 - a. What does that word mean?
 - b. Are you comfortable using that kind of word for God? Why or why not?

4. Building on that image, Brian says that God looks upon us like a parent does their child. Knowing everything about us and more, God still loves us and sees great value in us. Our worth and value comes from that truth and our relationship with God.
 - a. If the above is true, why do we still seek affirmation from those around us?
 - b. How can you begin to find your primary place and worth in this world by looking up instead of looking to your left and right?

August 28, 2022: Week Three

Key Scripture: Matthew 25:14-30

The final cure in this series for thinking our lives could be better if we were more like someone else has the power to change everything. Even the world in which we live.

Discussion Questions:

1. As Brian begins unpacking this parable, he gives us a couple of things to keep in mind. What does he say about the following:
 - a. What is a talent in this parable?
 - b. Who are we in this parable?

2. What is important about the way the first two servants begin their reconciliation with the master? What does this say about whose wealth it was?

3. Brian ties the ancient parable into our modern lives by asking a few questions:
 - a. To whom does what we have truly belong?
 - b. Does the way you use the resources God gave you reflect the above truth?
 - c. How might you better leverage the resources you have for God's glory?

4. The sermon ends with Brian imagining how God feels when we ask, "Why God won't make things better here on earth?" What does he imagine God's answer to be? What do you think about that?