

Danger of Comparisons
Lesson 8– Biblical Self Esteem and Your Identity in Christ
July 19, 2015

A. Biblical Self Esteem – Accepting Who You Are

Starter Questions:

- Do you ever feel inferior compared to others? Does that feeling of inferiority cause you pull back or not be as confident as you should in serving Christ?
- Does a feeling of inferiority cause you to withdraw or retreat to a protective place, feeling “less than” others?
- Are you an unwilling captive of comparisons? At times are you tormented with thoughts of inadequacy or failure?
- Do you struggle with feeling bad about yourself in certain areas?

Finding your identity in Christ is critically important. Being a captive of comparisons can lead to feelings of inferiority, pain and often being unaware of your God given talents and capabilities.

Deep discontent can be generated through comparisons. It could be about education, skills, looks, talents, material possessions, money; you name it!

Key points:

- Comparing yourself to others will cause you to lose sight of your giftedness and God-given talents
- Losing sight of your talents will lead to ineffective or non-existent ministry in God’s plan and kingdom
- ***Only when we begin to confront inappropriate comparisons and treat them as sin, will you begin to take back control of your life through the help of the Holy Spirit***
- ***This will create a newfound freedom and self-awareness of serving in God’s plan***

B. Scriptures for Lesson:

Numbers 13:1-3; 26-33

1 The Lord said to Moses, 2 “Send some men to explore the land of Canaan, which I am giving to the Israelites. From each ancestral tribe send one of its leaders.” 3 So at the Lord’s command Moses sent them out from the Desert of Paran. All of them were leaders of the Israelite...26 They came back to Moses and Aaron and the whole Israelite community at Kadesh in the Desert of Paran. There they reported to them and to the whole assembly and showed them the fruit of the land. 27They gave Moses this account: “We went into the land to which you sent us, and it does flow with milk and honey! Here is its fruit. 28 But the people who live there are powerful, and the cities are fortified and very large. We even saw descendants of Anak there. 29 The Amalekites live in the Negev; the Hittites, Jebusites and Amorites live in the hill country; and the Canaanites live near the sea and along the Jordan.” 30 Then Caleb silenced the people before Moses and said, “We should go up and take possession of the land, for we can certainly do it.” 31 But the men who had gone up with him said, “We can’t attack those people; they are stronger than we are.” 32 And they spread among the Israelites a bad report about the land they had explored. They said, “The land we explored devours those living in it. All the people we saw there are of great size. 33 We saw the Nephilim there (the descendants of Anak come from the Nephilim). We seemed like grasshoppers in our own eyes, and we looked the same to them.”

When we struggle with comparisons, we are usually comparing our weaknesses to someone else’s strengths. The 12 leaders chosen by Moses to explore Canaan came back scared and fearful:

- We often mistakenly assume that others think or feel about us the way we think about ourselves

- By comparing themselves to the inhabitants of Canaan, the Israelites lost sight of who they were and God's promise to them
- Comparison lead to fear, faithlessness and disbelief; grieving the Holy Spirit
- These actions resulted in God being angry with them
- Joshua and Caleb had a different report, believing God's promise to provide!
- We need to be like Caleb and Joshua, despite our circumstances, we must believe God and conquer comparisons

Ephesians 2:4-5; 10, 19-20

4 But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, 5 made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved.....10 For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.....19 Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God's people and also members of his household, 20 built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone.

We need to rightly consider ourselves God's handiwork:

- Through God's love and mercy we are alive and should demonstrate thankfulness, not grumbling, questioning and discontent around who God made us to be
- You were created exactly as God planned and wanted; What is there to be sorry about, unhappy or feeling inferior about
- Our saved spiritual position is totally adequate for God with the spiritual gifts and skills he has provided you
- Not a need to worry one about yourself

C. Questions for Small Group Discussion:

1. Is it scripturally and doctrinally correct to consider some comparisons as sin?
2. Comparisons leading to extreme feelings of inferiority are dangerous; discuss how you can deal with thoughts of inadequacy or failure?
3. Do our own inner thoughts of ourselves tend to drive what others see and think of us? How do we stop this negative spiral resulting in us believing less of ourselves?
4. With respect to Numbers 13 scriptures:
 - a. Why do we always seem to compare our weaknesses to others strengths?
 - b. Why did most of the leaders seem to totally forget God's promise when they assessed the situation on the ground?
 - c. Discuss how leadership through Caleb and Joshua was needed and changed the outcome? What happens if we do not have strong God driven leadership?
5. With respect Ephesians:
 - a. What does being "God's Handiwork" mean to you?
 - b. What does it say to God when we gripe or show discontent about ourselves?
 - c. Discuss how God creating us exactly as he planned from the beginning of time should help us feel and act about ourselves?