



God's Masterpiece

Message by Rhena Kulasingham, 12th May, 2019

Comparison

- “Comparison is the death of joy.” Mark Twain
- Comparison can lead to a vicious cycle of unhappiness.
- Comparing is focusing on the lack of something instead of being thankful for what we have. It's longing for another's blessing while ignoring what God has for us.
- “If you try to follow everyone else and be like everyone else, before you know it, you're gone. You're not going to find yourself again; you'll just be a version of what you might have hoped to have been.”- Dolly Parton
- “To wish you were someone else is to waste the person you are.” – Sven Goran Eriksson
- Comparison also leads to envy and jealousy.
Proverbs 14:30 (NLT)
A peaceful heart leads to a healthy body; jealousy is like cancer in the bones.

In the Bible:

- Cain and Abel (Genesis 4). God accepted Abel's offering but not Cain's. This made Cain jealous of Abel. He later lured Abel into a field and killed him.
- Joseph (Genesis 37). Jacob loved Joseph more than any of his other sons because Joseph was born to him when he was old. That made Joseph's brothers angry. Joseph's dreams further angered his brothers, they were envious of him and sold him into slavery.
- The story of Saul, and his envy of David (1 Samuel 18-19). David was successful in all that he did. Crowds chanted how Saul killed thousands while David killed tens of thousands, which made Saul angry. Twice Saul tried to kill David with a spear.
- In the New Testament – Jesus' disciples struggled with this too. At one point Peter showed a hint of envy of John, the apostle Jesus loved (John 21:20-23). Peter asks Jesus if John will have a long life. Jesus responded to him by saying "If I want him to remain alive until I return, what is that to you?"
- The act of comparison is an act of violence against who you are. Every minute we spend wishing we had someone else's life is a minute spent wasting ours.
- Comparison reveals our brokenness. The reason we compare ourselves is because deep inside we are not satisfied with what we have and who we are.

How do we battle comparison?

1. Trust in God's plans and His provision for us.

Acts 17:26-28 (NIV) From one man he made all the nations, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he marked out their appointed times in history and the boundaries of their lands. God did this so that they would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from any one of us.

- This means that you are born at a time and place He determined.

Jeremiah 29:11 (NIV) "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."

- Not only do we need to trust in God's plans, we need to trust in God's provision by being content with what we have.

The Discontented Farmer

In his book *Money: A User's Manual*, Bob Russell describes a farmer who once grew discontented with his farm. He griped about the lake on his property always needing to be stocked and managed...And those fat cows lumbering through his land. All the fencing and feeding—what a headache!

He called a Realtor and made plans to list the farm. A few days later the agent phoned, wanting approval for the advertisement she intended to place in the local paper. She read the ad to the farmer. It described a lovely farm in an ideal location—quiet and peaceful, with rolling hills, carpeted with soft meadows, nourished by a fresh lake, and blessed with well-bred livestock.

The farmer said, "Read that ad to me again." After hearing it a second time, he decided, "I've changed my mind. I'm not going to sell. I've been looking for a place like that all my life."

Philippians 4:11-12 (NIV) I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. 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.

1 Timothy 6: 6-8 (NIV) But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that.

- Comparison is a poisonous fruit of discontentment which says that we are not satisfied with how God made us, that we are not happy with where he has placed us, and that we don't appreciate the life he has ordained for us, and that we are not happy with who we are. And so, when we compare ourselves with others, we are saying that God made a mistake, and it is an insult to God.

2. Embrace the gifts that God has given us.

- We have each been fashioned to fulfil a special role and all are equally important and necessary members of the body of Christ.

1 Corinthians 12:4-7,11,12,14-18 (NKJV) There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of activities, but

it is the same God who works all in all. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all: 11-12 But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills. For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ. 14-18 For in fact the body is not one member but many. If the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I am not of the body," is it therefore not of the body? And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I am not of the body," is it therefore not of the body? If the whole body were an eye, where would be the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where would be the smelling? But now God has set the members, each one of them, in the body just as He pleased.

- We all have gifts and God has given them to us as He pleased. We need to be thankful for the gifts that He has given us.
- Comparison limits our potential.
- "Learn not to compare yourself to other people because comparison will clip your wings and shoot you down. It will drive you to the dead end of your dream, your vision and your destiny." - Euginia Herlihy

Romans 12:6 (The Message Bible) "Let's just go ahead and be what we were made to be, without enviously or pridefully comparing ourselves with each other, or trying to be something we aren't."

- "The only person you should try to be better than is who you were yesterday."
- Jesus is the measure to live life by.

Hebrews 12:2a (NKJV) "Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith....."

Psalms 17:15 (NKJV) "As for me, I will see Your face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied when I awake in Your likeness"

2 Corinthians 10:12 (ESV) "Not that we dare to classify or compare ourselves with some of those who are commending themselves. But when they measure themselves by one another and compare themselves with one another, they are without understanding".

- We have what we need

1 Corinthians 4:7-8 in the Message Bible: "For who do you know that really knows you, knows your heart? And even if they did, is there anything they would discover in you that you could take credit for? Isn't everything you have and everything you are sheer gifts from God? So what's the point of all this comparing and competing? You already have all you need. You already have more access to God than you can handle. . ."

3. Know who you are in Christ

Ephesians 2:10 (NLT) "For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago."

- "God has given you one face, and you make yourself another." – William Shakespeare
- "If God had wanted me otherwise, He would have created me otherwise." – Johann von Goethe

Psalm 139 Living Bible (TLB)

1-4: O Lord, you have examined my heart and know everything about me. You know when I sit or stand. When far away you know my every thought. You chart the path ahead of me and tell me where to stop and rest. Every moment you know where I am. You know what I am going to say before I even say it. You both precede and follow me and place your hand of blessing on my head. This is too glorious, too wonderful to believe!

13-16: You made all the delicate, inner parts of my body and knit them together in my mother's womb. Thank you for making me so wonderfully complex! It is amazing to think about. Your workmanship is marvellous—and how well I know it. You were there while I was being formed in utter seclusion! You saw me before I was born and scheduled each day of my life before I began to breathe. Every day was recorded in your book!

17-18: How precious it is, Lord, to realize that you are thinking about me constantly! I can't even count how many times a day your thoughts turn toward me. And when I waken in the morning, you are still thinking of me!

- To be fearfully and wonderfully made – means each one of us was reverently, wondrously, strikingly, remarkably, differently made - in ways that are beyond human comprehension.
- “Anyone who knows who God made them to be will never try to be someone else” - Bill Johnson
- We are God's unique creation! We are God's masterpieces!
- God made only one you; you are the only you. The one and only. Only you can be you.