

# COMPARISON: A THIEF OF JOY

Redeemer Church Women Ministry Newsletter

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In John 10:10 Jesus says, "The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they might have life and have it abundantly." Here, Jesus draws a sharp distinction between his own intentions and the intentions of the enemy Satan. Satan is pictured as a thief coming to steal the joy of humanity, the height of God's creation. While Satan is a thief, sometimes he does not have to work very hard to steal, kill, and destroy our joy. He cunningly lets us self-sabotage through comparison, another thief of joy.

I am not sure about you, but for me, the dangerous and insidious sin of comparison has leaked its way into this COVID season. In some ways, I have dangerously courted comparison through the doorway of social media which presents an unfair and unrealistic string of highlights and snapshots that cannot hold up against the reality of my everyday.

Rather than leaning into the Lord in the midst of this hard, I find myself leaning into half-truths and/or lies grown in the seedbeds of comparison. *Her house looks so clean in the midst of COVID while mine is covered with mold. Her children seem to be loving homeschool while mine seem to be languishing under my teaching. If only we had a pool or lived in this community or that-sized house....*

Comparison is really a wayward child of pride that can only result in self-obsession either through pride or insecurity. C.S. Lewis says the following about pride and comparison.

"Pride gets no pleasure of having something, only out of having more of it than the next man. We say that people are proud of being rich, or clever, or good-looking, but they are not. They are proud of being richer, or cleverer, or better-looking than others. If every one else became equally rich, or clever, or good-looking there would be nothing to be proud about. It is the comparison that makes you proud: the pleasure of being above the rest."

When we allow comparison to live in our hearts, we will ride the roller coaster of pride and insecurity, and our contentment will be directly tied to our performance and/or circumstances.

Comparison looks around, snooping around the lots and portions of others; contentment looks up and sees the hand of the One who has lovingly, wisely apportioned the present lot that has drawn up by God's hand.

If we must compare, let us compare ourselves with our Lord. Let us remember the heavy lot that was apportioned to him: one of humility, simple service, betrayal, misunderstanding, and even suffering and death on the Cross. Let us remember that the One who received an unfair lot has graciously, carefully, intentionally appointed our particular present portions.

For words of Scripture that help us combat comparison, the thief of joy, check out Psalm 16:5-6, Luke 12:32, and Psalm 37:1-7.

May we lift our eyes to the Good Shepherd who comes to give us teeming, abundant life!