

The Sin of Comparison

Today I am talking about the sin of comparison. It never works. Let me give you an example of why the sin of comparison never works. You go shopping at a clothing store and look at two nice suits that are made very well. You try to find one for yourself. You look at one and think, "No, that is not me. It is not my taste." You look at the next one and you think, "Well, that is better but it is still not it, but better." And then, the person who owns the store comes in and says, "Ah, I have just the suit for you. Come here in the back room. This is one my tailor has made and it is going to fit you like a dream. To make sure it fits you like a dream, I want you to try it on and we are going to adjust it to you, to your body. Oh look, one of your shoulders goes up one-half inch higher. No problem. We will alter the suit to make it fit." That is how God is with you. What He has for you to do with your life is how that suit would fit you – perfectly. Would it fit anybody else? No, it might look like it would, but it would not because it was tailor made for you. There is nobody else in the world who can wear that suit like you can. That is the way God's world is. It is all designed that every one of us have a part and we do not need to compare ourselves with other people.

Have you ever looked at someone and wished you could look like them? Have you ever wished you could be as smart as they are, as gifted as they are, have the advantages they have had or get to do what they have done? Have you ever wished you were at their social level or their income level?

Of course, we are all normal. You have to fight that because there is a good way to compare yourself to someone and there is a bad way. We do not want to do it the bad way. It makes you miserable. It makes you envious and it makes you jealous. Those three things are the triplets that make you miserable, just the worst. You get down on yourself. You think why was I even born?

What can I do? You will never come up to what somebody else is doing because you always compare your worst to their best. Sometimes people get so full of pride they look down on everybody and they compare themselves and say, "Yep, I am better than everybody else." Well, you are not.

You just might be better than everybody around you, but there is a big world out there. There are people who are way above where you have been. It does not matter. All that matters is for you to cooperate with God and do what you are supposed to do.

Here is my first Scripture I want you to look up and underline in the Bible if you are struggling with the sin of comparison. It is Isaiah 45:9. "What sorrow awaits those who argue with their creator? Does a clay pot argue with its maker? Does the clay dispute with the one who shaped it, saying stop you are doing it wrong? Does the pot exclaim, well how clumsy can you be." I know people do that. It is like, now God, You got a mess when You made me. What is the deal here? How come I am like I am?

God says, "Oh, you just need to get on the pot again up there and let Me work on you. I am the clay maker and I will correct you. I will refine you." You do not have to be perfect, but you have to be willing to be teachable and correctable for what your thing is; not teachable and correctable so that you can become an imitation of someone else.

I have a very strong personality. When I was young, I would look at women that were real feminine and quiet and think, "I need to be like that. Guys seem to like that." I tried to be like that for a guy I was dating, but it was not me. I remember that guy. I broke up and said to myself, "I am going to be me. If guys do not like me that is okay, but I am going to be me." Right after that I met my husband and he liked me just like I was. I love to be with him because I did not have to pretend to be anything. I could just be me. The more I was me, the more he liked me. I will tell you another thing.

Do not ever forget this concept; the more you are completely natural, the more God is completely supernatural in you. That is how God made you. He knows how He wants to flow through you.

(Look in this picture of these two men comparing themselves. They are doing it and how do you think they are passing the test? I do not think they are. You can look and see what they are thinking. You can almost read their minds.)

When I was taking teams of women to Russia, I was aware of my weaknesses. I knew where I make mistakes. I remember saying many times to God, "Why did You pick me to do this Lord? This is a big job. I have done bad things. I have done good things. I have weaknesses. Lord, I can think of five women who could do this job better than I could. Why did You pick me?" The Lord led me to Romans 9:11. It is talking about Isaac and when he married Rebekah and she gave birth to twins. Verse 11 says, "Before they had done anything good or anything bad she received a message from

verse 11 says, "Before they had done anything good or anything bad she received a message from God and this message shows that God chooses people according to His own purposes. He calls people but not according to their good or bad works." Was God being unfair? No, God gets to decide what He is going to do and that is the way it is. With Pharaoh He said, "I appointed you to show My power and to spread My fame throughout the earth." God chooses to show mercy to some and He chooses to harden the hearts of others so they refuse to listen. You say now wait a minute, do they have a choice in that? Yes, there is not one person in hell that says God did not give me a chance. Not one. I am talking about people that lived in the jungles and never heard of Jesus. Jesus is the only way. What happens? God finds a way to get to people and bring them to himself. He loves people. The Bible says He is not willing that anybody should perish and He finds a way to get what is needed to get to them. There is no one in hell that says "I did not have a chance."

How did the sin of comparison hurt me? It hurt me because I looked at all of the strong points of these women that I thought could do a better job. I did not look at a single weak point they had.

What did I do with myself? I looked at my weak points and I did not look at my strong points. God straightened me out, I can tell you. One day He had me sit down and write out on a piece of paper why I was the best person for this job. It really encouraged me. I began to look at what I can do and what I am good at. I said, "Of course You would use somebody like me. I am the perfect person for it. I love it. I thank you for letting me do it." That is the way it needs to be with your life.

Do you realize that comparison is a sin? God does not want you to do it. He says do not do it.

When God says do not, do not. We think of a sin, maybe murder, stealing, immorality, but constantly comparing yourself to people, putting yourself down and making yourself look less than others is not pleasing to God. It is not pleasing at all. It is something that God says, "If you do it, it keeps you from doing what I want you to do."

I want to read you a verse that God has had to say to me. It is Isaiah 48:6. "You have heard My predictions and seen them fulfilled but you refuse to admit it." God will give you prophecies over your life and He will send you people to prophesy into your life and say this is what the Lord says. You need to keep those. Keep them in a safe place. Keep them where you can read them over and over. If it has been done on tape, listen to it over and over, because it keeps you going where God wants you to go. Then you do not have to compare yourself. Why was I refusing? I was struggling.

Is this really going to happen? Look what has happened. God has picked people. God has used people. If you look at what has happened to you in life, you can see why you were the perfect person for the job. Have people put you down and made you think that you are not any good? Yes, unfortunately.

I want to tell you about a lady who used to be really famous in the 40s and 50s. Her name was Ethel Waters. She was a famous gospel singer and movie star. However, her background was not very good. She was the product of rape, illegitimate, raised by a young, young mother. I think her mother was like 13 years old. She of all people could have looked down on herself and said, "I can never amount to anything. Look at how my life got started." Instead, she was always saying, "Honey, God does not make no junk." That is how you need to see it. It is the truth. I do not care if there are billions of people in the world; God cares about every single one of them. He knows their name. He knows when they sit down, when they stand up. He has a plan for their life. He does not make any junk.

No matter where your circumstances started out or where life has taken you, God wanted you born into this world. There is something for you to do. There may be many things for you to do. It is just that His plan for your life is so perfectly fitted only you could do it. You have to accept yourself just like you are and call yourself a work in progress. That is what we all are. Until the day we die, God is going to be working on us. You keep growing if you have the attitude of I will be teachable and correctable. I will change any way I need to change. I will change because I want to go as high as I can go and reach my dreams, whatever they are, that God has for me. Do not fight with God about what you look like, how tall you are, what your body looks like or what your nationality is. Just accept it. Realize that He does not make any mistakes. You are not a mistake. I do not care who tells you that you are. You are not. You can do great things. You can be great.

If you are sitting in a prison cell right now watching this, you may be saying, "Oh man, I thought I was going to do better with my life than this. I got in with the wrong crowd and I have ruined my life." No, you have not. You have caused a big stopgap, yes. You have to pay the penalty. All you have to do is give yourself 100 percent to God and say, "I do not know how You can use me with the mess I have made of my life; but God, here I am, all of me." You will be amazed at what God does to you and with you. It is wonderful.

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If you were the only person who ever lived on earth, Jesus would have come and died for you. How do I know that? Because God is not willing that anybody should perish. He goes to great lengths to get people to come to Him, to get salvation through Jesus, to have eternal life. It is a very sad thing when a person says, "No, I do not believe." I meet people who do not believe because they are hung up about other people. They say, "Well, what about them?" My question to you is what about you? You are the one that has to decide for you. You do not know what is going on in their life, but what are you deciding for you? Do you believe? Do you trust in, rely in, and cling to Jesus? Have you come to Him and asked Him to forgive you of your sins, to come into your life and make you the kind of person He wants you to be? If you have, I can tell you for sure God's plan for your life has started. Even if you say, "Betty, there has been something really bad that just threw it out of kilter. I was in a car wreck. I am crippled. I lost everything in the business I know God brought me into." It is not true. We have an enemy and he does everything he can to stop us and to stop God's will. Have you noticed that if you just keep your faith in God, the next thing that happens is that you go up higher than ever? If he were not the devil I would feel sorry for him.

I heard a funny thing about Kenneth Hagin. They said, "You know, Kenneth, you are so positive. You never say anything bad about anybody. I bet you would say something nice about the devil." He said, "Well, he is persistent." It is just that no one else has the call on your life that you do. If you do not get away from comparison, jealousy can enter your heart.

Do you know what it is like being around a jealous person? They are never happy, never satisfied and have constant turmoil on the inside. What is the answer? Focus on Jesus. Focus on His call for your life and say, "Lord, I am not perfect, but I will do it. Tell me what You want me to do; and I will do it. I do not care if it is big. I do not care if it is little. I will do it." In Isaiah 26:3, it says, "God will keep your mind in perfect peace if your mind is stayed on Him." When you get in that turmoil of comparing, of feeling less than, just stop and focus on Jesus, focus on God. Think about Psalm 139 that says He has a plan.

Hebrews 12:2 is a Scripture that can encourage you. It says, "Jesus is the author and finisher of our faith. Actually the word there is like the developer, like people used to develop negatives before they had digital cameras. He is the completer of your life." Can you grasp what I am saying today about how much God loves you, how special you are to God? His plan is just tailor made for you. It brings Him so much joy to see you in the plan. That is who you need to focus on is pleasing the Lord.

It is not about perfection. A lot of people think, "I have got to be perfect. I cannot make any mistakes. I cannot fail. It has to be perfect." They are uptight. One time the Lord spoke a word of wisdom. Now, a word of wisdom is not just you are a wise person. I Corinthians 14 says that wisdom is a supernatural gift, supernatural. It is wisdom you could not have thought up yourself, no way.

You have never heard it anywhere. God said to me, "Perfectionism focuses on you. Excellence focuses on Me." Excellence does not have to be perfect. There is room to make an error. It is just that you keep trying to get it better, trying to get it better and trying to get it better.

You are not hard on yourself and you are not focusing on yourself. How about Jesus? Do you think He did His job that God called Him to do? You know He did. There on the cross He said, "It is finished." He had done it. He was ready to finish His work on the cross. He said, "It is finished."

How about the Apostle Paul? Had he saved the whole world? Had Jesus saved the whole world? No, but they both had done what God had called them to do. The Apostle Paul said, "I have fought a good fight. I have kept the faith and I finished the race." What a great thing to say.

You have to get a personal relationship with Jesus to know what I am talking about. You have to read the Bible a lot. You have to study the Bible a lot. Get with people who can explain the Bible to you. Is there a time that comparison is not a sin? Absolutely, when you need a role model. You need to know that nobody is perfect, not even your role models. They are going to have things in their life that is just a weakness in their life. Maybe they can conquer it and maybe they cannot, but they are still a good role model and you need those. Someone asked me recently, "Who is your mentor?" I went back through the list starting from the time of my first mentor, Bea. She taught me how to evangelize everybody. I can remember saying to her, "If everybody is going to hell and they are all lost, where are they?" I cannot see them. She said, "Betty, they are everywhere." Then I had a lady who mentored me in doing mission work around the world named Winona. God will put people into your life. After that, I had a couple that mentored me. Debbie mentored me in dreaming big and reaching out and doing things nobody else had ever done. Larry mentored me in character development, character training. After that, I had another man named Bill. He was the man who mentored me, in fact he still does, on how to go to other countries and work from the top down with world leaders and touch a country by doing it that way. I have a mentor now that speaks into my life. He is still over my ministry. I can call him and say how do I do this, how do I do that. His wife is still an inspiration to me.

You can have friends who are godly and love Jesus. You compare yourself to how they are doing it. You can have mentors like I have that can help you improve. How can I be better? How can I be more like them? I will tell you how you can tell the difference between good and bad comparison. You do not feel pulled down and discouraged by looking at them in this kind of comparison; instead you feel encouraged, motivated and inspired. I read stories all of the time about people. I just got through reading one about Albert Schweitzer. I really like to look at people and say, what do they have that I do not have and how can I get it. You can be mentored by reading books that people have written or books written about them. That is another way to compare yourself to somebody and grow and change. I am reading a book right now about the leadership of Billy Graham, how he was a great leader. We all think Billy Graham was a great evangelist and a great pastor but this man that wrote the book said that "Billy Graham is one of the greatest CEOs that I have ever known." I am reading this book and at first I thought I will read this book and just try to remember. The more I read, I thought that I need to get a yellow marker. I have to remember this. I want to have this kind of an organization.

In closing, I want to tell you to accept yourself. Do not change and try to be like someone else. Imitations are not the real thing. When you wear a diamond, you want a real diamond. You do not want an imitation diamond. You are a real diamond in God's eyes. Now try hard to change what you need to change. Be willing to let people speak into your life that you can trust. They can be an example for you. Just remember, there was no one ever perfect except Jesus and He is the only one. You are not ever going to be perfect but you can follow Him. He can be your greatest role model.

QUIET TIME QUESTIONS

1. What is the sin of comparison?
2. How does it hold you back?
3. When is comparison not a sin?
4. What scriptures from this lesson help you to understand that you are made the way God wanted you and He loves you as you are?

To watch the video on THE SIN OF COMPARISON, Pillar Six, Leadership Skills, go to www.bettyswann.com.

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