

Small Group Discussion Outline



Friendship How Can I Keep From Comparing Myself With My Friends?



Read: 1 Samuel 16:1-13



How can I keep from comparing myself with my friends?

Realize you don't know others the way God knows them.

As you look around at your group of friends, you may notice one has a great body or personality, another has a great job, another has a great family. One may be categorized by others as a "winner" and another as a "loser."

But society's standards are confusing. The "best" person is the one who makes the most, who has a spouse who treats her like a queen, or whose kids are on the honour roll. Today's culture does not value what's most important: the quiet simplicity of knowing God, and the strength and peace such a relationship gives us.

Imagine the surprise of David's family when Samuel wanted to see the runt who had been out in the fields singing to himself (we now call these songs psalms). Who, him? Apparently, no one would have guessed David was a candidate because they didn't even bring him in to meet Samuel.

Outwardly, David may have seemed like an unlikely choice, but God saw much deeper than David's relatives and friends could. It's impossible to read someone else's motives—to know his pain or imagine his dreams. There is so much you don't know about others - or God's plans for them – and so it makes no sense to compare yourself to them. Instead, focus on purifying your own motives and giving God your dreams. Then who knows what glorious things God may bring into your life!

Good Words to Remember: 1 Samuel 16:7

The LORD does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart.



Am I open to receiving God's plan for my life?



Read: Mark 10:35-45



How can I keep from comparing myself with my friends?

Remember earthly position is just that—earthly.

Have you ever felt just the least bit jealous of a friend? Maybe she's a fit-and-trim aerobics instructor, and you're having trouble with those last ten pounds you'd like to lose.

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Every time you see her in her gym gear, you grimace inwardly and wish you looked like her. Or perhaps your single friend just got the job of her dreams, and you're a stay-at-home mum who's trapped in a tiny house with three kids for the summer. Or your friend who became a Christian three months ago is growing rapidly in his faith—and yours seems to be going nowhere.

It's easy to compare yourself (and your life) with others. But let's face it, No one person has everything (looks, talent, spiritual growth, and so on). In this passage, Mark sets the record straight. Instead of looking for what other people have, especially those friends who seem to have more than you do (a bigger house, better looks, a nicer family), remember that looks are just that—looks. Jesus says that, in the long run, "many who are first will be last, and the last first" (10:31). He also says that, in order to be great in God's kingdom, you must serve others (10:43).

That means that, instead of comparing yourself to others, you accept your talents, looks and financial status as gifts from God. Then you focus on loving your friends as Christ would.

Good Words to Remember: Mark 10:43

Whoever desires to become great among you shall be your servant.

Are you satisfied with your life, or do you constantly compare yourself to others who are higher in earthly status?



Read: Numbers 6:22-27



How can I keep from comparing myself with my friends?

Learn to bless your friends.

Aaron and his sons had a big responsibility: They had to look out for the entire nation of Israel. So God gave them a special prayer—a blessing for all the people—to recite. And God promised that when Aaron and his sons blessed Israel, He would listen to them.

Like Aaron and his sons, you are responsible to pray for your friends. And Aaron's prayer is a wonderful model to use. When you pray for your friends, begin by asking God to protect them from spiritual danger, physical danger, illness, temptation, and other difficulties. Then ask God to show His kindness by actively blessing your friends with all that they need—food, clothing, shelter, spiritual wisdom and strength, healthy families and relationships. Pray that your friends will find peace. For your unsaved friends, ask that God will show them His salvation so they can be at peace with Him. And for fellow believers, pray that God will protect them from spiritual discouragement and help them to grow in their knowledge of Him.

When you spend time praying for your friends, your focus shifts from yourself and your own needs to their good. Follow the threefold pattern of Aaron's prayer, and you'll find you have a whole new perspective on friendship.

Good Words to Remember: Numbers 6:24-26

The LORD bless you and keep you; the LORD make His face shine upon you, and be gracious to you; the LORD lift up His countenance upon you, and give you peace.



Which friend do you need to pray for today?

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