NEW LIFE CLASS

BRIDGING THE GAP

BETWEEN BIBLICAL LEARNING AND RADICAL LIVING



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Overcoming the Obstacle of Comparison

Some topics that comparison leads to: *Envy…jealousy…ego*.

There is a type of comparison that makes us feel **INADEQUATE** *incapable* of taking on a task that God is asking us to do.

The reality is that it is natural for us to compare ourselves to others. But we must realize there is **DANGER** involved when we compare.

1. The Danger of Comparison

When we compare ourselves to others, we're often comparing their best features against our average ones. It becomes an issue of **WITHDRAWAL**.

Theodore Roosevelt: **"Comparison is the *thief* of joy."**
Mark Twain: **"…the *death* of joy."**

To avoid this danger, we need to realize two things.

There is one thing that you're better at than anyone else: **BEING YOU**. Psalm 139:13-16

"We won't be distracted by comparison if we are *captivated with **PURPOSE***." – Bob Goff

2. Overcoming the *Obstacle of Comparison*

The New Testament lists the disciples four times – Matthew 10:2-4, Mark 3:16-19, Luke 6:14-16, Acts 1:13.

The lists all follow the same basic pattern:

- Peter is always first … Judas Iscariot is always last.
  - James and John … Andrew … Philip …
    - Bartholomew … Matthew … Thomas …
      - Then #9, 10 and 11 – Simon the Zealot … James the Less … Thaddaeus

Prime candidates for struggling with the *Obstacle of Comparison*.

➢ **Simon the Zealot.**

In Israel at that time, there were four groups – political parties in a sense.

The Pharisees *The Sadducees* *The Essenes* *The Zealots*

Nobody liked Roman rule. But the Zealots **HATED** it!

Even to the point of hating Jews who worked for Rome – like tax collectors … *Matthew*.

There is never any record of a confrontation or discord between Simon and Matthew.

Obviously, Simon's relationship with Jesus had **CHANGED** him…*but he didn't lose his zeal.*

Acts 1:13 – still Simon the ***Zealot***. Acts 1:14 -- "All these with *one accord* …"

Simon learned: It's about <u>HIM</u> ... not about me. John 3:26, 28-30

I need to keep what makes me unique ... but remember that *the doing is for Him*.

- **James the Son of Alphaeus ... aka James the Less** (in church history)

  The *Obstacle of Comparison* is right there in his name!

  But James never faded away, he didn't drop out, he didn't go back home.

James learned: Significance doesn't require <u>STATURE</u>.

Mark 3:13 "And He (Jesus) went up on the mountain and called to Him ***those whom He desired.***"

Significance comes from the One who called me ... the One I serve.

- **Thaddaeus / Lebbaeus / Judas the son of James**

  John 14:18-23

  "Why bestow this special grace on ***me***?"

  Jesus' answer: "Because you said '**<u>YES</u>**'."

Thaddaeus learned: <u>LEGACY</u> matters more than memory.

We may not remember anything about Thaddaeus, but we have been impacted
by the legacy that he and others have left as they spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Remember the earlier illustration: "We're not here to make ***you a star***; we're here to ***tell the story***."

- ***No story is complete without <u>ALL</u> the parts.***

  God's story is like that. Though they did not stand out, Simon, James and Thaddaeus were each an ***irreplaceable*** part of the story.

- ***And so is each one of us ...***

  Satan is pushing a lie that says, "You only have an impact ... you're only important ... you're only worthwhile ... if you're the star, have the most talent, make the biggest splash."

- ***Don't let Satan's lie keep you from obeying God's call / leading in your life.***

Simon learned: *It's about Him...not about me.*
James learned: *Significance doesn't require stature.*
Thaddaeus learned: *Legacy matters more than memory.*

No story is complete without ALL the parts. *Each of us has a part that is vital to the success of the whole.*