

*The Burden of*  
**BETTER**

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How a Comparison-Free Life  
Leads to Joy, Peace, and Rest

*Heather Creekmore*



LEAFWOOD  
PUBLISHERS

*an imprint of Abilene Christian University Press*

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*To every woman, young or advanced in years, who,  
through the common act of comparing herself to another  
woman, has ever felt compelled, pressured, forced, driven,  
obliged, required, urged, or prompted to be “better.”*

*And, to my little, red-haired girl, Katie.  
May every search for satisfaction lead you back to Jesus.*

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## Introduction

### THE COMPARISON—FREE LIFE

Don't worry. There's no way she felt my gaze. I stood on the balcony, hidden many rows deep, just like my heart of comparison. Since I remembered the chorus from childhood, I didn't need to read the words. Instead, I analyzed her as I sang each line of the worship song.

“God, you're so good.”

*Are her legs thinner than mine? They might be. Is she wearing heels? That would make them look thinner, of course—that and the dark denim. I wonder how she gets her hair so smooth when she straightens it. That's a cute sweater set she's wearing. I think I used to own something like that. That would have looked better than this dress I have on. I can barely breathe because of this stupid shapewear. She's probably naturally thin and doesn't have to wear suffocating undergarments.*

“God, you're so good.”

*She has such an incredible voice. I wish I was a better singer. I remember leading worship that one time at youth camp. Of course, the mean sound guy told me he turned my mic way down. I guess singing's still not my thing. Why didn't I take voice lessons? Then I*

*could have been a worship leader. She's so in tune with Jesus; I bet she never struggles like I do.*

“God, you’re so good. You’re so good to me.”

As I belted out the last line of the song, conviction overwhelmed me. While singing about God’s goodness—to me—I was comparing myself to another woman, sizing her up. At church, nonetheless! *Sigh*. I had measured myself against her from every angle—using fictional rulers I’d constructed to assess my own value. Why must I always compare myself to others? Did I truly believe God was good to *me*? Did I even understand all the aspects of his grace? These are the questions I’ve wrestled for months, years even, on my journey to finding freedom from comparison.

Do you ever find yourself lost in comparison’s labyrinth? See if any of this sounds familiar:

- Do you chase the “ers”? I won’t name them all for you, but start with *better*, then add—happier, healthier, thinner, stronger, nicer, wealthier, or smarter. I’m sure you can think of more.
- Do you mentally keep a list of goals that seem to promise they’ll take your life from drab to fab if you reach them?
- Do you look at old pictures and compare yourself to the “you” that you used to be?
- Do you look at images of other women and compare yourself to the “you” that you long to be?
- Do you know in your *head* that you shouldn’t compare yourself to others but struggle to stop your *heart* from doing it?

If you answered yes to any of these questions, then we have a whole lot in common, my friend. But carrying that burden of better weighs us down.

Maybe your burden of better feels like guilt—you have a list of *shoulds* scrolling through your mind. Or maybe it feels like obsession or drive—unless you get to that goal, you’re sure satisfaction will never come. Sometimes the burden of better can even look like healthy determination—success comes to those who “work for it.” You don’t want to be a slacker, after all.

But what if the better we chase is an elusive destination? When we compare ourselves to others, there’s really no objective standard of measure, right? *Better* is a comparative adjective. It can only be defined when in relationship to someone or something else. In other words, better only exists when you’re comparing.

## Comparison-Free Living

Today, I want to invite you to lay down the burden of better and try something revolutionary. I call it *comparison-free living*. Though I’m not a doctor, I feel confident writing this prescription: for your best chance at experiencing a life of joy, peace, and rest, you need to live comparison-free.

“Comparison-free? What does that even mean?” one friend asked me.

“Is that even possible?” another friend chimed in. “Sounds unrealistic.”

But with Jesus’s help, I know you can live free of comparison. On the list of things God will help us accomplish in this life, I firmly believe “stop comparing” ranks high. We miss so much of what God wants for us because we’re looking around instead of looking up.

It might seem hard or even impossible to imagine right now. Comparison may be your constant companion. Like the friend who’s a bad influence, you know you shouldn’t be hanging out, but there’s just something about her that captivates you. Or maybe it feels like comparison’s stalking you. She’s that random person you



always encounter at the oddest of places. She's on the other side of the cereal display in the grocery store. Then you run into her again, randomly, at the PTA meeting, and then again at the gym.

Maybe you always meet her at the worst times. Let's say you get invited to a fancy party and spend weeks planning what you're going to wear. Hair done. Perfect shoes. Extra time on the makeup. Your man is impressed and you feel good. Until you walk into that room and realize Comparison came with you. *How'd she get an invite?* Comparison makes sure you notice every woman in the room who looks (in your estimation) better than you. She diligently keeps at it until your confidence deflates and your shoulders slump. *Why did I think this was going to be fun, anyway?* Can you relate?

I graduated from high school before the invention of social media, but I still spent decades battling comparison and body image issues. Comparison has been around since Bible times—just look at Cain and Abel, two dueling brothers. A few chapters later, sisters Rachel and Leah struggle in a grand contest of one-up-manship. Though the struggle of comparison is older than the pyramids, the avenues we can use to compare are now prolific thanks to technology. Within seconds, you can compare your life to just about anyone's. Anywhere. Anytime.

But, friend, to roll over and back float in comparison's tumultuous sea of insecurity would be a tragic mistake—tragic because God has so much planned for you, just as you are. (Well, mostly. He's got some work to do on your sanctification, I'm guessing. He's still working on me, at least.) Please understand that God is not waiting for you to measure up—to get the look, lose the weight, remodel your home, get those extra degrees, earn the promotion, or even take better selfies! God is not worried about how you compare to those around you. He's got a plan and purpose for your life that doesn't depend on her life, or her life, or even hers. . . . God

doesn't saddle us with the burden of better. He invites us to rest in his best.

No matter what you're most prone to compare—be it the size of your kitchen or the size of your rear end—I hope you'll embark on this journey to a comparison-free life. To start, we'll take a look at why we compare, what comparison really does to us (hint: it's not as harmless as we think), and how we can really stop it in our hearts. Then we'll explore the way out: a path so soaked in grace that once you experience it, you'll forget about chasing "better."

Bring some friends along for the journey. I have a sneaking suspicion they may be struggling in this same area. You can choose to read this book alone. But reading it with a friend or two (or your small group) means you'll have people to process with and accountability after you've finished reading.

## A Journey toward Contentment

Years ago, my doctor diagnosed me with Hashimoto's disease. My thyroid numbers changed from "You may consider getting some help" to "You need medication. Always."

But then my doctor paused and uttered those words I hoped I'd never hear: "You really need to be gluten free. You'll feel better if you can cut it out altogether." I kept it together in her office. Politely, I told her I understood and refused nutritional counseling. (Anyone who's been on as many diets as I have has no problem understanding food ingredients and types.) Then I got in my minivan and cried—a sorrowful mourning of gluten's departure from my life. It felt like a death in the family. *Brownies? Warm French bread? Pancakes? Toll House cookies?* Foods containing flour held a special place in my heart.

To make matters worse, I was headed to gluten heaven—Italy—in two weeks. We'd been saving and planning for this tenth-anniversary trip since our wedding. The timing was awful. How

could I possibly enjoy Italy without pizza and pasta? Couldn't my thyroid just tough it out a few more weeks?

But God's grace went with me when I ventured into the land of lasagna and linguini days after swearing off gluten. Gluten intolerance is recognized as a disability in Italy (to not be able to eat pizza in Naples *would be* debilitating), so options abound. Gluten-free pizza and pasta, made the Italian way, taste delicious. I didn't feel deprived for a moment.

And, friend, that's really what this book is all about—contentment. When you live a comparison-free life, you no longer see your deprivations as clearly as you see your blessings. Shedding comparison and that burden of better allows you to embrace grace and experience rest, joy, and peace in amazing new ways. You become full of the plenty, not focused on the lack. After tasting the comparison-free life, you'll never want to go back.

Are you ready to take this journey with me? Then pack some sandwiches (gluten-free for me, please) and let's get to it.

*Section One*

**REALITIES OF THE  
COMPARISON-FILLED LIFE**

## Chapter One

### SWEATING ALL STUFF

*Never compare your journey with someone else's.  
Your journey is your journey, not a competition.*

—Anonymous

Someday I'll write a memoir called *Beautiful Women Don't Sweat*.  
Watch for it.

In it, I'll tell the story of Jenny. Her perfectly straight brown hair and bangs framed her face like a child cuddling a kitten. She turned her head, and her hair effortlessly floated with her. And, most importantly, Jenny didn't sweat.

I stood in the girls' locker room, trying to get my bangs to fluff. (And by fluff I mean stand up, precisely curled and poofed, and stay there.) Of course, my ultra-fine hair didn't cooperate. So I used half a bottle of Aqua Net to help the cause. Jenny didn't use hair spray. The year was 1989, but she didn't need it. *It figures.*

We played field hockey together, which meant practices and running and—in my life—all the things that make one's pores ooze salty liquid. If you didn't endure the 80s, let me offer some

insight—sweat and Aqua Net don't mix. Jenny? *Sigh*. She looked just as fresh after practice as before. No smeared makeup, no matted and wet hair. Just perfection. Or so I believed.

Jenny was flawless, while I was beauty's backup dancer. Though no one ever said it directly, I knew, deep down, that Jenny and I were in different leagues. In beauty's social stratification, Jenny was a have. I was a have-not. There's a lot I don't remember about high school. But, somehow, still emblazoned on my hippocampus are images of Jenny—beautiful, sweat-free Jenny—and her perfect hair. Constant comparison leaves a mark.

I decided to do a little research to see what comparison actually does to our brains. Turns out, comparison may legitimately stain our brains more than the average memory. Scientists working with monkeys studied their brain and hormonal responses, and they observed how male monkey cortisol levels (their stress hormone) spiked higher when their mates stood near another male monkey. In other words, monkeys feel jealous. Researchers also found heightened activity in two other parts of the brain associated with social pain and bonding.<sup>1</sup>

Science hints that we connect comparison to social rejection in such a way that it *actually* changes the neural pathways in our brains. These changes can completely alter our core beliefs—including how we see ourselves. Because I compared myself to Jenny, my brain received a message as if someone had actually rejected me—or told me I wasn't as pretty as Jenny. Then, like dripping chocolate ice cream on my favorite white blouse, it left a mark on my brain.

I hate stains on clothes. But stains on one's brain, how do they come off? If it leaves a mark every time I compare myself to someone, I can only imagine what a blotchy mess my brain must be.

Of course, I don't think I would have told you I envied Jenny. *Yikes!* That's too strong a word, isn't it? I just admired her and

then compared myself to her. All the time. Jealous? *Nah*. That's something different. It's not like I was the evil stepmother in *Snow White*, devising a scheme to take her out so I could be the fairest of them all. *No*. I just wanted to *be* her. Well, not her exactly. Just a "me" version of her. Beautiful, like her. Fit, like her. Sweatless, like her. A sort of "me-her" hybrid.

Jenny graduated a year before me, but I saw her shadow again in college. I'd love to tell you that I matured my way out of comparison by that time, but lying is not helpful. Instead, college provided a grand opportunity for me to realize that there were so many more women I could be comparing myself to. Why limit my life goals to just being like Jenny? Wouldn't I be the "best" me if I found a variety of people with whom to compare myself? Obviously, I needed sweat-proof skin and hair like Jenny's. But maybe my quest for a better me would benefit from additional role models.

Soon, comparison was my normal—a constant companion on good days and bad. She let me swell with self-satisfaction when life went well. Then she'd drag me to the pit and throw dirt at me on the days I felt I didn't measure up.

## The Comparison-Filled Life

This morning I went to a new friend's house. It was like being on the set of a home improvement show. Shiplap, dark wood floors, barn doors, and an incredible white kitchen with subway tile. I asked her if Joanna Gaines *actually* came and designed it. (Waco's not that far away; it was possible!) As I soaked in the beauty of her home, I was reminded that becoming an adult didn't cure comparison in the ways I had hoped.

Instead, adulthood and independence have offered even more ways for me to compare. Grades, clothes, and popularity were the sandboxes comparison played in throughout high school and college. Now there are endless "grown-up" ways I can compare

myself to other women. Does her husband *really* plan creative date nights? Are her children better behaved than mine? Does she *really* decorate her front porch every holiday? *Ugh!*

While there's no rational reason for me to feel crushed under the weight of not having a perfect home, a *Sports Illustrated* swimsuit model perfect body, or a *Forbes* top-50 perfect career, some weeks I still do. All the striving. All the stress. Comparison's promise of better trapped me on a vertical slip-and-slide, unable to move forward on the path God intended because I was stuck, scaling and slipping. Up and down. See if any of this sounds familiar.

First, I needed a better body. Because everyone knows that you "should" try to look hotter/skinnier/healthier (pick your favorite "er" word) when you are . . . in your twenties, a bride, a newlywed, a new mom, an old mom, a thirty-something, a forty-something, a pastor's wife, a fitness instructor. (Insert whatever stage or age you may have felt pressure to "look better" here, and I think you'll get what I'm saying.)

Second, I had to be the best. *The best at what?* That didn't really matter. If I was doing it, there was no sense in doing it halfway. I had to be the best student, the best employee, the best in my kickboxing class, the best mom, the best wife, the best friend, the best daughter. Now, granted, I didn't come anywhere close to reaching "best" status in most of these areas. (Especially not kickboxing. Enough said.) But with a postcard reading "Commit Yourself to Constant Improvement" stuck to my desk, I knew that the harder I tried, the better I'd get. I could attain "best" status with more effort. *Someday.*

Third, I wanted to feel like I was winning. Because being the best isn't enough unless you know that the best is actually better than all the others. I used to tell my husband that compliments didn't count unless they included superlatives. Rather than, "You are so pretty," I wanted to hear, "You are the prettiest!" *Yes, I was*



*that crazy.* As you may have noticed, most of life is *not* actually a contest where people are named winners and losers. But those of us who wrestle comparison tend to subconsciously see life as that spelling bee (or beauty contest) we never got over losing. (Fourth place in eighth grade. The word was “ricochet.” I thought two c’s were in the middle. *I will never forget.*)

With this perspective—when every arena feels like a competitive event—life becomes our own personal Olympics. If you want to win a medal, you play the game. Maybe you’ve competed in some of these specific competitions too.

**Cutest dressed at church.** Attending second service (i.e., more time in the morning) and having a healthy assortment of outfits to choose from helped me achieve a gold medal finish in this race some weeks.

**Best-behaved children at playgroup.** You know, that one day when all the *other* people’s kids were biting each other and not sharing Goldfish, mine used their manners and shouted, “Love one another!” at the fighting kids. (So, it only happened the one time. I can hang on to that shining parenting moment forever. #stillwinning)

**Best wife.** I made a dinner he liked. Cleaned up the house. Showered and put on makeup too. Then (wait for it) did the dishes. All without complaining or silently being mad at him for not complimenting me on changing out of workout clothes. This I graded on a curve because I didn’t *actually* know what other wives did. But, in my mind at least, I sprinted the equivalent of a four-minute mile in the best wife race.

**Most helpful friend.** If she had surgery/a baby/death in the family/tough day, I made a homemade meal and dessert and delivered it to their home across town with a smile on my face. No matter what else was on my calendar. So what if I had to pick up takeout for my family and grumped at everyone within earshot

because I was on tilt? I fulfilled my role as the nicest friend ever and showed up at your door with my chicken enchilada casserole and gluten-free brownies. *Someone play my anthem, please?*

**Cleanest house when company comes over.** The baseboards were clean and every sink shined. Well, at least when expecting visitors—only because I spent the last thirty-six hours cleaning, designating certain areas of the house as off-limits, and yelling at my family to keep things sparkling. Of course, when the company arrived, I'd humbly apologize for the place being such a shambles. "I barely had time to clean the floors. . . ." *She shoots and scores! What a win, ladies and gentlemen! What a win!*

I spent so much time competing in my head that I almost lost touch with reality. My boundaries were way out of whack. (It's hard to have good boundaries when you're trying to please everyone.) My soul was parched, my heart was unsure, and my confidence fluctuated more than the winter weather in Texas. (A single week in January can feature snow days and ninety-degree scorchers!) When you live the life of comparison, it's hard to believe that life is not a contest. Everything inside you wants to keep competing so you know where you stand. *Don't fall behind; that feels awful. Keep making progress. Get ahead. It will help you feel good. It'll bring you more love, more affection, more attention, and more admiration.*

Comparison becomes your identity—driving everything you do and say and affecting every decision you make. But here's the truth: a life stuck in comparison is an existence of both burden and struggle, with no redemption. You always need to do more, have more, *be* more. Comparison captures us in its prison—trying to meet the impossible and ever-changing standard of better. You can't be fully present in the life God designed for you when you constantly wonder what life would be like if it were more like hers.

## Expensive Watches

I recently watched a video where a man explained why people buy expensive watches. To me, a \$200 watch sounds a tad excessive. But there are some who wear—on their wrists—timepieces that cost ten times the worth of my minivan. The speaker offered an incredible explanation for why people wear such fancy watches: It's because they can't take their yachts out to dinner with them. *Of course! Wait, what?*

Expensive watches, he explained, are the culmination of the comparison battle. At median income levels, people compete with houses and cars. At the next higher bracket, they compete with better homes and better cars. But eventually you reach a point where you jockey for status by owning the best yacht or biggest island. Since you can't carry those wealth symbols around, you buy a \$100,000 watch.

Interesting, but sad. Right? How hollow that must feel. Even the wealthiest of the wealthy don't escape the comparison game—the satisfaction of “winning” still eludes them. It seems there's no actual top rung to comparison's ladder. Sure, you may never have shopped for a Rolex because you couldn't carry your yacht around. But, friend, the same principles that apply to the comparison of wealth apply to every area in which we compare ourselves. When we compare, there's no winner—only losers trapped in a hollow life of comparison.

## Trapped in the Middle

I'm sitting at my desk watching a wasp that somehow got stuck between the screen and the window. He keeps trying to fly full speed into the screen to get back out to the yard but can't break through. Then he buzzes over to the glass to try to break free into our home. Back and forth he goes, buzzing around and searching for any opening. Though I'm happy he can't get in, I can only

imagine the frustration going on in his bug mind. He sees vast pictures of freedom on each side, yet he stays trapped in the middle.

Comparison traps us in the same way, distracting us from fully living. Instead of experiencing joy and rest, we stay stuck, buzzing at the window. We see life but never know contentment. Sadly, too many are convinced there's no other way. I watched a wonderful Christian woman on YouTube share this very idea with her million followers. Comparison, she lamented, could not be controlled. Our best hope is to know how to console ourselves after we do it.

I disagree. Yes, comparison may be a habit—but habits can be broken. Yes, comparison may come naturally—but that doesn't mean we bow to her demands. Comparison isn't an undefeatable beast. She's more like a scary shadow on the wall. Once you point enough light at her, she disappears.

### Whose Ugly Is Ugliest?

So how do you shine the light on comparison and make her go away? This seems to be a hot topic for Internet memes. Maybe you've even reposted them. One popular picture quote is attributed to Steven Furtick: "The reason we struggle with insecurity is because we compare our behind the scenes with everyone else's highlight reel." That's a fine statement. There's some truth there. Too often, we do compare their sparkle to our shambles. In this Facebook age, our friend's perfect family picture pops up on the day we didn't have time to shower or get the kids out of their pajamas. We fight with our spouse, then get on Instagram and see a friend's "so romantic" date night. But here's my problem with this as a proposed remedy for comparison: What if my ugly really *is* uglier than your ugly?

- What if their marriage fight is over toothpaste and yours is over infidelity?

- What if their parenting problems are too many video games while yours involve serious rebellion?
- What if she battles the scale for ten pounds while you're fighting to lose a hundred?

I wonder if this quote instructs us to compare our worst with someone else's worst, instead of quitting comparison altogether. How do we stop comparing when we really are struggling? Pretty platitudes can't answer this question.

Then there's another way some attack the comparison problem: tell people to focus inward. We instruct our teenage girls not to compare themselves with the magazine covers because it's what's on the inside that counts. We encourage everyone to "be their best selves" and to only compare where *you* are today with where *you* were yesterday. That's not awful advice, for some. But I know many women who are caught in a prison of comparing who they are today with who they were ten years ago. How can this advice free them? Let's be honest. Does anyone ever actually feel better after hearing, "It's what's on the inside that counts"?

Instead of defeating the beast, pithy quotes only put comparison on a leash to keep it from running wild. If we treat comparison as a pet to be tamed instead of a pest to be eliminated, we sidestep real spiritual issues that require our attention. When our hearts wonder, "Is it *really* okay that I'm not like her?" the only truly satisfying answers come from the gospel. Comparison isn't an external issue focused on who we are or the abundance of our possessions. Comparison's quest for better is an issue of the heart.

## The Beast of Better

If you think about it, comparison always presents itself as an issue best resolved through improvement. If I could just *have* a better body, home, children, clothing, car, career, marriage, you name

it . . . then I would stop comparing. If I could just get *this* part of my life right, if I knew I was succeeding in some part of it, *then* I'd stop. If everything could just *be* a little better, then I could find rest. Comparison's prison is an if-then paradox. Our joy, our rest, our happiness, and our peace all depend on meeting our goals, getting what we desire, or, in the worst cases, capturing the ever-elusive beast of better. This is when better becomes a burden. A massive burden!

"It's not about you; it's about *me*," we convince ourselves. "Comparison is not a *big deal*," we reason. "It's necessary for my self-improvement," we rationalize. My comparison doesn't actually hurt anyone. Does it? I'm afraid the Bible disagrees. It tells us not to size up other people (James 2:1). The apostle Paul tells us in 2 Corinthians 10 that comparing ourselves is foolish. When we become winners at the comparison game, we puff up with pride. But pride hurts our relationships by causing both division and strife (Prov. 13:10; 1 Cor. 4:6–7). When we become losers in the comparison game, we are filled with envy, doubt, jealousy, and even lust. That's not healthy for anyone either.

I'm guilty too, so please don't hear any condemnation in that last paragraph. The anthem of "do better like her" beats in my head too often. My heart's intent is to lift you up, not tear you down. Yes, I want us to clearly see what happens when we wear that burden of better. But know even the toughest parts of this journey will be accompanied by a symphony of grace because that's the only tune that will carry us out of comparison's cacophony.

I write about life in the land of comparison because I spent so much time there that they forced me to register my car. I didn't understand grace or what it could be like to live comparison-free. But daily I'm learning to surrender my proclivity to chase better—and daily I ask God to help me learn to rest in him.

Like an Instagram filter, a greater understanding of God's grace tints and clarifies the way we view the world and our place in it. That filter of grace helps us see every event, every struggle, and every triumph differently. Likewise, the filter of gratitude can help us actually change the way our brains are wired, wiping off those stains comparison left, so that we spend less time comparing and more time savoring the days we have.

Comparison isn't something you simply decide to get over. It's not a life stage you grow out of (ask some of my blog readers who qualify for senior discounts at department stores); nor is it a trivial habit you can choose to write off as "no big deal." Every minute you spend comparing is time stolen from your pursuit of God's plans for you.

## **Your Journey Begins**

In the first part of this book, we'll look at some of the not-so-obvious reasons we compare ourselves to others and how the often quoted "stealing of our joy" may be one of comparison's milder consequences. I refer to these as the "me reasons" to stop comparing.

Then we'll look at the "He reasons" we should give comparison the boot. In Section Two, we'll explore some of the resources God has given us for combating comparison effectively—namely the four different types of grace. We'll look at how to filter our view of life through each of grace's different manifestations. When we understand all that we already have through Christ, we can more confidently lay down that burden of better.

In the final section, we'll look at how to practice grace, gratitude, and contentment so we can stop viewing our lives through the lens of comparison and instead experience the peace, joy, and rest God intends us to have as his children.

Portions of this book were written in our minivan. My fighter-pilot-turned-pastor husband was able to take a sabbatical before the start of our next ministry opportunity, so we hit the road. Our journey took us through the desert, to the Grand Canyon, to both coasts, and home to Texas again. Some days—like our whale-watching trip in Southern California—have been amazing. Others—like when half the family burned with fever but we kept driving—were not as magical.

As you start your own journey toward a comparison-free life, you may experience different terrains too. You may feel amped up, ready to stop comparing right now! But in a few days, that temptation to compare may come back even stronger. Let me encourage you: that's normal. Have you ever tried to give up sugar? Then you may know how by day three, gummy bears and Oreos are all you can think about. There are similarities. But stick with it. Throughout the course of this book, you're going to gain the tools you need to overcome the temptation to compare. Work through the material, one chapter at a time—and don't skip those journaling exercises and the memory verses at the end of each chapter. They'll help a lot. When comparison entices you with its empty promises, you need to be equipped with Scripture to answer it back.

The longing for better can either leave us glaring at our reflections in futility or growing in maturity as Christians. Discovering true purpose and freedom in Christ has transformed every part of me, and it can do the same for you. You *can* stop comparing, and trust me, once you get a taste of the comparison-free life, you'll never want to go back.

### Takeaway

Comparison's contest doesn't have any winners. Instead of searching for a higher rung on comparison's ladder, it's time to hop off.



## Comparison-Free Life Action Plan

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Read 2 Corinthians 10. What does this passage teach us about winning our battles against struggles like comparison? What else do you notice in this passage that could apply to comparison?

1. In which areas of your life do you find yourself most likely to compare?
2. Can you think of any examples of how comparison has trapped you or kept you from doing something you wanted to do or dreamt of doing?
3. How have you fought the “elusive beast of better”? In what ways have you felt the pressure of the if/then paradox? (If you did this, got this, looked like this, *then* your life would be better in this way.)
4. What area of comparison might be the most difficult for you to give up?
5. Do you believe that comparison could be a spiritual issue instead of anything related to your possessions, success, looks, and so on?

**Memory Verse:** “For you, O Lord, are my hope, my trust, O Lord, from my youth” (Ps. 71:5).



*Lord, help me as I begin this journey toward a comparison-free life. Open my eyes to the ways I've allowed comparison to distract me from your purpose. Show me your truth in a personal way as I take this journey. Help me desire more of you and less of me. Amen.*