

# THE COMPARISON TRAP

## SMALL GROUP STUDY GUIDE

Week 1 February 23, 2025  
“The Land of ER”

### OPENING PRAYER

Heavenly Father, we come before you seeking wisdom and discernment as we explore your word. Grant us the ability to see beyond our own perspectives and hear the truth you have for us today. We pray this in the matchless and powerful name of Jesus. Amen.

### SCRIPTURE PASSAGES

#### Ecclesiastes 4:4-8 (NIV)

*<sup>4</sup> And I saw that all toil and all achievement spring from one person's envy of another. This too is meaningless, a chasing after the wind.*

*<sup>5</sup> Fools fold their hands  
and ruin themselves.*

*<sup>6</sup> Better one handful with tranquility  
than two handfuls with toil  
and chasing after the wind.*

*<sup>7</sup> Again I saw something meaningless under the sun:*

*<sup>8</sup> There was a man all alone;  
he had neither son nor brother.  
There was no end to his toil,  
yet his eyes were not content with his wealth.  
“For whom am I toiling,” he asked,  
“and why am I depriving myself of enjoyment?”  
This too is meaningless—  
a miserable business!*

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## INTRODUCTION

We’ve all heard of a win-win outcome. But we are daily engaging in a lose-lose activity and we may not even realize how destructive it is. Being rich-**er** or smart-**er** or funny-**er** may feel like a short-term win, but for ourselves, our families, and our marriages, comparison is a game with no winners.

Maybe you’ve racked up debt trying to keep up with your neighbors. Maybe your high expectations drive your spouse or kids crazy. Maybe you have relatives you don’t get along with because you envy what they have and rejoice in their failures. You can’t genuinely love someone whom you secretly hope will fail. You can’t genuinely love someone whom you’re pushing to meet a standard so you can feel better about yourself. There’s no win in comparison. There’s never a finish line or sense of satisfaction.

## QUESTIONS

1. When you played games or sports as a child, were you a good loser? How did you handle winning?
2. Have you ever had to work hard to meet someone else’s expectations? How did it affect your relationship with that person?
3. What is your greatest ambition in life right now? What are you doing to pursue it? Is that ambition motivated at all by comparing yourself to others?
4. Are you exhausted or broke from trying to keep up with friends or neighbors? If so, explain.
5. Is there anyone you secretly enjoy seeing fail? What can you do to extend that person grace?

## FINAL APPLICATION

What is one thing you can do this week to allow the thought of tranquility – contentment - to help you pause in the midst of the comparison trap? How can this group help?