

Strength
dignity ⁺
WOMEN
WITH PURPOSE

Comparison
is the thief of joy

Leaders copy



LESSON TWO: Rachael Lock

Comparison is the thief of Joy

(Intro and welcome – Introduce yourself and the evening's topic.)

(Watch AV Clip titled 'Joy' 3:32mins. Encourage the ladies to write down anything that resonates with them, then discuss as a group after).

Notes:

Read and then discuss the following questions).

Comparison is the thief of Joy – Theodore Roosevelt

Q How does that statement make you feel?

Q Do you agree with it?

(Read aloud) Comparison can be a destructive weapon in anyone's life but especially in us women. We constantly compare ourselves to each other whether we consciously mean to or not.

If you listen to your internal dialogue, the thoughts running through your head, you would understand that comparing ourselves to others is something we most definitely do.

"Wow she looks amazing, I wish I looked like that."

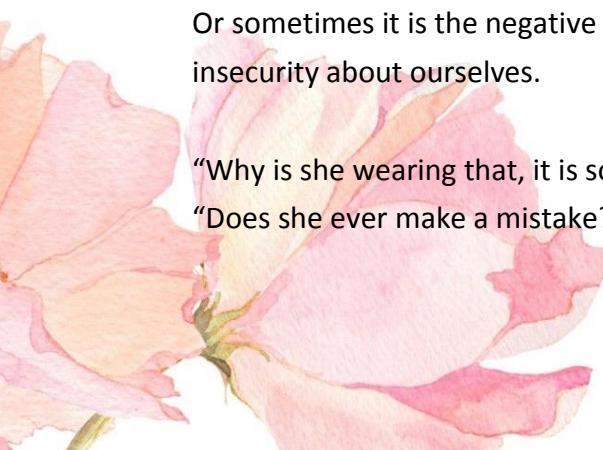
"Why can't I sing like her?"

"Why did she get all the brains and I have to try so hard just to get by?"

Or sometimes it is the negative things we think about another person that shows our insecurity about ourselves.

"Why is she wearing that, it is so unflattering."

"Does she ever make a mistake?"



Honestly, does this really make us feel better about ourselves? Why do we feel this need to bring others low to lift ourselves up?

All we are really doing is comparing, competing, feeling insecure, overwhelmed and losing our joy. Do you think this is how God wants our days to be spent, consumed with negative thoughts about ourselves and others, while being distracted from the plans and purposes He has for us? [\(Discuss what you have just read\).](#)

[\(Read and discuss the following questions\).](#)

Q Has there been a time in your life where you have compared yourself to others?

Q How did you deal with this?

We were not designed to constantly compare ourselves to others. We need to be safe and secure in ourselves knowing we are uniquely created by God, just the way we are. We need to be women whose words build each other up, who encourage and lift those around us.



[\(You will need some scrap pieces of paper and pens for this exercise\).](#)

Exercise: On a piece of note paper write down something encouraging you would like to say to a significant woman in your life, something you really admire about them. [\(It could be your mum, grandma, friend\).](#)

Share as a group the encouragement you wrote about this woman. (You don't have to name them). [\(If you have a big group they can share at their table groups rather than as a group as a whole\).](#) [\(Discuss the following questions\).](#)

Q How does it make you feel to give encouragement to another woman?

Q How do you feel when someone encourages you? Are you able to accept encouragement or do you struggle to receive it?

(Read aloud) Psalm 133:1 – *“How wonderful and pleasant it is when brothers (sisters) live together in harmony!”* (brackets added).

In Psalms we see this lovely scripture about how ‘*wonderful and pleasant*’ it is to live in harmony. Receiving encouragement lifts our spirits and likewise giving encouragement makes us feel good. We need to be purposeful and actively encourage other people in our everyday lives.

Here is another great scripture giving guidance on how to treat one another.

Romans 14:19 NASB – *“Pursue the things that make for peace and the building up of one another.”*

(Read aloud) Proverbs 31 is a scripture often used to describe what women could obtain to be like.

There are many great attributes in this scripture but one that really sticks out is vs 25-26 *“She is clothed in Strength and Dignity and she laughs without fear of the future, when she speaks her words are wise and she gives instruction with kindness.”*

I don’t think it is a coincidence that the way we speak, is mentioned in this scripture that is often put in front of us as a measure of what we as women could be like. God designed us women a certain way and He definitely gave most of us the ‘gift of the gab,’ however, it is our responsibility how we use it.

As women, let’s unite, let’s stand together, encourage one another and not let the enemy take any more ground. When we speak, let our words be wise and kind. Let’s stop comparing ourselves to others, be brave enough to encourage one another, and live true to who God designed us to be.

(Watch second AV clip) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-ivj2aAhf0w>

Comparing yourself is useless – Joyce Meyer

Psalm 139:14 – *“I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well.”*

We are fearfully and wonderfully made!

God has got something for you to do that only you can do!

Accept who God made you to be.

Find your place, find your purpose, find your Joy!

(Encourage the group to take a look at the extra study and website in their free time. www.strengthanddignity.co.nz

Wrap up lesson two and give details for the time and date of the next Strength and dignity – Women with Purpose session).





Extra Study – Rachael Lock

Women love to talk, we even like to gossip!

You may not want to call it that but if we are honest, we all get caught out gossiping at times. There is a scripture in the bible that addresses this rather well:

Proverbs 13:3 - *“Those who control their tongue will have a long life; opening your mouth can ruin everything.”*

How many times have you wanted to take back what you have just said or wish you hadn't repeated or embellished something to make it sound better?

Proverbs 31:25 -26 - *“She is clothed in strength and dignity and she laughs without fear of the future, when she speaks her words are wise and she gives instruction with kindness.”*

To have strength and dignity *would* clothe you in courage. You would know you hadn't done or said something that would make you fear the future or make you feel guilty or ashamed. How many times have you spoken to your children harshly then regretted it? Or maybe you have said something unwise to a friend that you haven't been able to take back.

This is part of the reason why we shouldn't compare ourselves. We need to be women whose words build each other up, who encourage and lift those around us. Ourselves included, sometimes our words are directed at others but other times we are destroying ourselves with our own negative thoughts and actions.

We need to know who we are, to be safe and secure in ourselves so we don't feel the need to compete and compare. We are all uniquely created by God, just the way we are. At some level we know this, but to live this out daily, is a challenge we all need to accept and conquer.

Who you are, is who you are, and that is exactly who God wants you to be. Nobody knows who you are completely, but God, only He can see all of you, all the wonder of you. Get to know who you are by getting to know God.

Read the whole of Proverbs 31: 10 - 31 and pray it over yourself. Declare over yourself who God has said you are. *“She is more precious than rubies.”*

Don't let your joy be stolen by comparing yourself to someone else. Let God define who you are.

www.strengthanddignity.co.nz for further reading and study.