

Perhaps you are tired of obsessing over meaningless rituals and constantly comparing your worth with worldly standards. Christ wants to give you a fresh outlook of love and grace towards yourself and others. Come clean today and stop obsessively comparing your worth with others. Look to the Lord and ask Him to clear away the corrosion of your soul and satisfy your heart with His joy and contentment. Your countenance will become a reflection of His love and beauty and your feet will get back on-track.

**"No, O people, the LORD has told you what is good, and this is what He requires of you: to do what is right, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God."
Micah 6:8*

DERAILED

Text: Mark 7:1-23

Plain Truth:

Comparison causes _____ of the soul;
so we trust _____ to _____ joy and
_____.

1. Pharisees - _____ creates _____.
 - a) Inner _____
 - b) Holding onto your own _____ or false _____.
2. Crowd - Comparison _____ us to _____ voices.
 - a) Not a _____ you, but a _____ you.
 - b) _____ management.
3. Disciples - Christ _____ us to live a _____ Gospel-life where every person is claimed as _____.
 - a) Jesus _____ us to invite others to _____ their worth in _____!
 - b) Jesus calls us to a _____ way of living by _____ people to _____.

One Year Bible Reading

Feb. 25: Leviticus 16:29-18:30, Mark 7:24-8:10, Psalm 41:1-13, Proverbs 10:15-16
Feb. 26: Leviticus 19:1-20:21, Mark 8:11-38, Psalm 42:1-11, Proverbs 10:17
Feb. 27: Leviticus 20:22-22:16, Mark 9:1-29, Psalm 43:1-5, Proverbs 10:18
Feb. 28: Leviticus 22:17-23:44, Mark 9:30-10:12, Psalm 44:1-8, Proverbs 10:19
Mar. 1: Leviticus 24:1-25:46, Mark 10:13-31, Psalm 44:9-26, Proverbs 10:20-21
Mar. 2: Leviticus 25:47-27:13, Mark 10:32-52, Psalm 45:1-17, Proverbs 10:22
Mar. 3: Leviticus 27:14-Numbers 1:54, Mark 11:1-26, Psalm 46:1-11, Prov. 10:23

February 24 & 25, 2018

Life Group Lesson

Week of February 25

There is nothing more miserable than constantly comparing ourselves with others. It's never ending. For some, we feel we will never measure up. There will always be somebody more good-looking, more successful, more desirable. For others, we surround ourselves with peers with whom we feel superior in order to prop up our egos. Such dysfunction can go on for years. Sadly, many of us live in a prison of illusion our entire lives. It's time to be set free from OCD—Obsessive Comparison Disorder—and begin to claim our identity and worth in Christ.

The Pharisees in Jesus' day honored age-old traditions over God's truth. They refused to admit their need for a Savior, and instead piously compared their spiritual pedigree with 'sinners' who would never measure up to their religious standards. Jesus said, "Healthy people don't need a doctor—sick people do... For I have come to call not those who think they are righteous, but those who know they are sinners" (Matthew 9:12-13). Do you give God lip-service, but inwardly look down on 'sinners' for whom Christ died? Do you ignore God's affirmation over you, and instead seek approval of your peers? At either extreme, obsessively comparing ourselves entangles us in rituals that have nothing to do with staying on-path with Christ.

Read Mark 7:1-23

Jesus said, "It's not what goes into your body that defiles you; you are defiled by what comes from your heart" (v15). The Lord calls us to holiness—not so that we are separated *from* people, but so that we can be separated *for* Christ's mission in the world—to love and serve people in His name. Christ has an exciting call over you, and yet, obsessing over what others think about you will derail God's mission and purpose for you.

1. A judged heart will judge others, while a freed heart will free others. Perhaps there has been a season in your life when you lived in constant judgment of others. How did that state-of-mind affect you and others around you?

Perhaps you have come to a place of freedom in Christ, enabling you to see others with eternal eyes. How would you describe your freedom in Christ to someone struggling with OCD? With whom is the Lord calling you to share your story of freedom?

At one point, most of us have worried over how we were perceived by others—what do they think of me? Do I fit in? Regardless of age, many people find it difficult to grasp that God's love is unconditional. And while the Lord meets us where we are and loves

us just as we are, He calls us to a new way of living. The apostle Paul says, "...Let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think" (Romans 12:2). If we can get real with God in the secret place, He promises to bring us out of the pit of self-saturation. Christ alone can give us a new heart and silence those inward voices set on replay.

2. Refer to the following Scriptures. Write one take-away from each passage that speaks to you today? Identify your trouble-spots. What does God see when He looks into your heart? What do you *want* the Lord to see when He looks into your heart?

Jeremiah 17:7-10

1 Corinthians 4:3-5

Psalms 103:2-5

Luke 6:37-42

Christ is bigger than our worries and fears. His joy is our strength! Peace and contentment will never come from trying to measure up—but from a personal unadulterated relationship with the Lover of your soul. You are special to Jesus, so much so, He fights over you every single day. Don't ignore His love. Receive it. Begin today to start enjoying the race He has set before you.

3. Get alone with Jesus and ask Him to show you what's triggering your OCD (Obsessive Comparison Disorder)—honestly reflect upon the questions below.

- ◇ Why am I afraid of what others think of me?
- ◇ What's the worst thing that could happen if they see the real me?
- ◇ Deep down, am I afraid of the real me?
- ◇ Why do I feel like everything revolves around me?
- ◇ Has my envy, jealousy, and pride become like a backed-up toilet that needs flushed and sanitized?
- ◇ What will it take for me to get-over-myself and begin valuing others around me?
- ◇ What would a life of sheer joy and freedom look like for me?

True joy and freedom is found as we begin to love and serve others in Jesus' name. The Lord said: "You know that the rulers in this world lord it over their people, and officials flaunt their authority over those under them. But among you it will be different. Whoever wants to be a leader among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first among you must be the slave of everyone else. For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve others and give His life as a ransom for many" (Mark 10:42-45).