

Read: 2 Corinthians 11:21b-30

No Comparison

2 Corinthians 11:30 (EHV)

If I must boast, I will boast of the things that show my weakness.

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Have you ever played a comparison game? It starts with someone telling you, “I’m better than you!” Your first thought is not going to be, “Yep, you’re right. You are better than me.” No, your first thought is probably going to be a claim of your own. “But I’m faster... I’m smarter... I’m prettier... Mom loves me more!” Sadly, the comparison game is never really a game. Feelings really do get hurt. Real tears fall from our eyes. Telling someone that you’re better than they are is called boasting. And boasting turns into arguing, which might even turn into fighting. Eventually, someone has to step in and break it up.

In today’s Word of God, some religious teachers tried to get the apostle Paul to play the comparison game. Paul worked very hard to share the good news of Jesus in a city called Corinth. These religious teachers boasted that they were better than Paul. They said they were wiser and stronger than Paul. They claimed to preach and teach more beautifully. They were better! Sadly, people believed them. Paul didn’t try to prove he was better. He just pointed to Jesus and his love. Even though Paul suffered many setbacks because he served Jesus, he knew the powerful love of Jesus would still shine through—despite Paul’s flaws and weaknesses. People would still hear about Jesus and be saved. None of those teachers could claim that they were better than Jesus. There was just no comparison.

Sometimes we are tempted to play a comparison game. We wonder if it would be better to be like those who don’t follow Jesus. We might feel embarrassed to say that we are Christians, because someone might think that following Jesus is silly or stupid. Yet no matter how others feel about Jesus, think of all the ways Jesus has shown you his gracious, powerful love. When you feel guilty, he forgives you. When you feel worried or anxious, Jesus calms you. When you are sad, Jesus dries your tears. When you and your family are going through a difficult time, Jesus is there with you. He helps you. He even blesses you through those difficult times in ways beyond what you can see with your eyes.

We don’t need to play the comparison game with Jesus. There is no one in the world better than him!

The questions below are to help families discuss this devotion. The questions are divided by age group as suggestions, but anyone could reflect on any of the questions as they desire.

Questions for the Younger Children

- How do you feel when someone tells you they are better than you?
- Who is better than anyone or anything in the world?

Questions for Elementary Age Children

- Why did Paul boast about being weak?
- When we feel weak, how does Jesus make us strong?

Questions for Middle School and Above

- How might God use suffering to bless us?
- *Agree or Disagree:* Better to be a foolish follower of Jesus than the wisest unbeliever in the world.

Closing Prayer:

Dear Jesus, with you there is no comparison to anyone or anything else in this world. Show your gracious, powerful love through us no matter how unimpressive we may feel we are. Amen.