

Limitless 5: Limited by the Comparison Trap

Vid bumper- Limitless

Hello Redemption Church, and hello to everyone watching and listening online. My name is Chris Fluitt and I welcome you.

What kind of Church is Redemption? We are the kind of Church that connects to culture. We actively look for way to communicate the Gospel of Jesus to new generations. We will try to do this today.

Limitless

In January of this year, 2018, we preached a sermon series called Limitless. #limitless2018

We want to take a few weeks to make sure you are still living a limitless life, by looking at some limiting habits.

God is limitless! And we are made in the image of this limitless God. God has given you limitless power, love, wisdom, and riches. You are limitless!

Philippians 4:13 (KJV) I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.

We can do all things through Christ. Through Christ we are limitless. YET.. there are some habits and practices that will take us out of Christ and put limits on our life.

Limited

Redemption Church do you want to live in the limitless life of Christ? If we want to live in the limitless, we need to lay aside the weights & sins (Hebrews 12:1) that cause us to live under limit.

One of these limiting practices is the Comparison Trap.

Comparison Trap

Do you ever catch yourself comparing yourself to others? Have you ever compared your finances to others?

- Your car & house?
- Your spouse, your kids?
- Your body, physical appearance?
- Your abilities to others?
- God's blessings?

Challenge

#1 Recognize how many times you compare yourself to others. How frequently do you compare?

#2 I want you to pay attention to how the comparison makes you feel? How do you feel about yourself? how do you feel about others?

When it comes to comparison, scripture is very direct in telling you not to do it.

Let's look at some of these scriptures.

2 Corinthians 10:12 (NIV2011) We do not dare to classify or compare ourselves with some who commend themselves. When they measure themselves by themselves and compare themselves with themselves, they are not wise.

We DARE NOT classify or compare ourselves... Classifying is that rating system where you think someone is 1st first rate and you are second rate.. that you are of a higher class than others... It is very destructive.

And to measure & compare yourself by yourself is not wise. That is like running a race all by yourself, and then after you finish the race, declaring yourself to be the fastest person alive. People like this always crown their own achievements and don't think highly of others.

Galatians 6:4 (NIV2011) Each one should test their own actions. Then they can take pride in themselves alone, without comparing themselves to someone else,

Pride is usually spoken of as something to avoid. There are a lot of scriptures that warn us about pride. But here Paul tells us about taking pride in ourselves... in our actions and achievements.

Take a look at your work. Test if it is the best you can do. Then you can take pride in your work, without comparing yourself to someone else.

Being happy for a job well done is healthy, but comparing your work to others is something to avoid.

Comparisons limit

This month marks 2 years since I went back to the gym. It can be very intimidating walking back into the gym after a long hiatus. I want to tell you about two limiting ways to compare yourself in the gym.

I want to introduce you to the House.

I call him the house because he is as big as a... HOUSE! This person has muscles on top of muscles. They have low body fat. In fact, if you get close enough you will notice they don't have ear lobes... they actually have abs where their ear lobes should be. These people lift big weight and it is very impressive.

So you walk into that gym and you see THE HOUSE pushing 125 dumb-bells in each hand... Do you even know how huge 125 pound dumb-bells are?

125 pound dumb-bell

You see the house lifting this weight and then you attempt to work out near this monster. You go to select your weight and you can't help but compare yourself to the house. You go over and pick up a 25 pound weight and you try to start your bicep curls only to find that the weight you chose was too heavy... with great shame you go over and pick up the 15 pound weights instead. You can't help but think "I don't look great... but I look even worse next to this guy."

Comparisons limit

People that compare themselves to the house will limit themselves. They will usually quit and never come back to the gym. They look at the house and they look at themselves and think... why should I even try and they go back home to their couch, Netflix, and potato chips.

But there are other people at the gym you could limit yourself through comparison.

Sometimes you walk into that gym and you see THE MOUSE. I want to introduce you to the mouse.

The mouse is not muscular. The mouse comes in different sizes. They may be overweight or just skin & bone with no muscle. They are in the area of the weight room where they have dumb-bells that you could swear were made by fisher price toys.

Fisher price dumb-bell

You see the mouse lifting this weight and you are more than happy to work out next to them. You look so strong when you compare yourself to the mouse. You don't struggle like the mouse. You are able to handle more strain. You can't help but think... "I don't look great... but at least I am not that guy."

Comparison works this way. It doesn't just exist in the gym.

There is a Mouse & a House in every area of life.

Beware the comparison trap. You compare yourself at school, at work, with your finances, at church, even in your home.

Not only do comparisons limit, the worst thing you can do is compare yourself to others.

The worst thing you can do is compare yourself to others

By comparing yourself to THE HOUSE... to someone who has more strength, more ability, more experience, more success you will become DISCOURAGED. You will not find the encouragement you need... You will be embarrassed, you will feel inadequate, feel like a loser... You can't experience success as long as you compare yourself to THE HOUSE.

The comparison trap has tricked you into thinking that you can only succeed by besting the house. That looks impossible and there are some situations in life where it may be impossible.

It is ultimately limiting to compare yourself to THE HOUSE.

But counter-intuitively, it is destructive to compare yourself to the mouse... the someone who is weaker, has less ability, less experience, fewer successes. You will not find encouragement in comparing yourself to the mouse. You will be deceived into thinking you are adequate. You do not have to push yourself to be stronger than the mouse and this will leave you over confident and lazy. You can't experience success as long as you compare yourself to THE MOUSE.

The worst thing you can do is to compare yourself to others!

Luke 18:10 (NIV2011) "Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector.

Luke 18:11 (NIV2011) The Pharisee stood by himself and prayed: 'God, I thank you that I am not like other people—robbers, evildoers, adulterers—or even like this tax collector.

Luke 18:12 (NIV2011) I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get.'

The Pharisee was comparing himself to the publican.

Luke 18:13 (NIV2011) "But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, 'God, have mercy on me, a sinner.'

The tax collector did not compare himself to the Pharisee. The tax collector compared HIMSELF to the Holiness of God and His commands. This comparison caused him to ask... to strive for God's forgiveness.

Luke 18:14 (NIV2011) "I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God. For all those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted."

The Pharisee had more religion. He had more scripture memorized. He had a longer list of good works. BUT THE ACT OF COMPARISON brought him to the wrong conclusion.

You are Limitless! You can accomplish anything. But if you fall into the comparison trap you will end up limiting yourself.

The worst thing you can do is compare yourself to others. But there is someone you can compare yourself to...

The best person to compare yourself to is who you were yesterday.

If you really want to see improvement in your life... if you really want to unlock your potential and grow in skill, strength, speed, & knowledge, you need to learn to compare who you are today, to who you were yesterday.

This requires discipline. This requires consistency.

Who were you yesterday? How hard did you work? How good was your work? How efficient was it?

Now outperform yourself today. Work hard to improve today over yesterday.

Did you waste time yesterday? Do better today.

Did you study and learn yesterday? Do more today.

Did you bring your best energy yesterday? Bring greater today.

Make yesterday look like THE MOUSE when compared to your effort today!

Slight Edge

This is called the slight edge principle. The idea is that you are not THE HOUSE today. You aren't the best, strongest, quickest, most skilled today. BUT by incrementally becoming better every day you will eventually become the incredible force you desire to be.

No one goes from "mouse to house" in a day. But if you will work hard and not quite you will succeed.

Galatians 6:9 (NIV2011) Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.

The House is someone who used to be a mouse, but just worked hard every day.

There is limitless potential in every day life, but you have to work for it. You must stop comparing yourself to others around you and start comparing yourself to who you were yesterday.

I want to give you 7 steps to achieving a slight edge over yesterday. I actually got these from a book called the slight edge by Jeff Olson.

7 steps to achieving a slight edge

1. Show Up.
2. Be Consistent.
3. Have a Good Attitude.
4. Be Committed for a Long Period of Time.
5. Have Faith and a Burning Desire.
6. Be Willing to Pay the Price.
7. Practice Integrity. Admit when you are not improving over yesterday.

Everywhere you go in life, there is a Mouse and a House. Sometimes we are the mouse. Sometimes we are the house. But whatever the present situation, you have limitless potential.

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Comparison Trap

Do you think Jesus is house or mouse?

Jesus is definitely house! He is God almighty robed in flesh. Jesus has all power. He is the way, truth, & life. He conquered death, hell, and the grave. Jesus can handle all your problems and save your soul. He is the House!

No one compares to Jesus. Scripture says “We all for short of His Glory!” (Romans 3:23)

But Jesus was also born into this world as a little baby. He was small and defenseless. Jesus, the house, came to earth as a mouse.

Why did He do this?

Philippians 2:7 says Jesus emptied himself of His glory, making himself nothing, being made in human likeness.

Jesus is our perfect example in all things. He shows us how to grow as a human.

Luke 2:52 (NIV2011) And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man.

Jesus could have used His divine powers, but instead He grew day by day over time.

We love the supernatural. God does the supernatural and we believe He can do the supernatural in us... BUT do not disregard the natural.

There have been times in my life when I was asking for God's supernatural, but God was trying to get me to improve in my natural.

Are we doing our best to improve in the natural?

We are about to talk to God. I want you to get ready to come very quickly.

Have you been caught in the comparison trap? Repent of that today.