

DAY 1

In the gospels, Jesus issues the call to follow Him more than 20 times.

THE ART OF BEGINNING WELL IS TO WALK EACH NEW

- year • relationship • opportunity • day
with JESUS.

Peter, like many of us, had a continual distraction from the simple call to follow. His desire to follow Jesus was often undermined by a condition called *comparisonitis*. We view our circumstances, our life, and even our blessings in comparison to others' situations.

READ John 21:15-21.

When/why did Peter become interested in what Jesus was going to do with John? How do you relate to Peter's question "What about him?" In what ways do we turn our focus from Jesus and SEE everyone else? How does that affect our ability to follow Jesus?

DAY 2

READ 1 Corinthians 12:15-18 and Ephesians 2:10.

Can you relate to comparing your own life to others' lives? Do you feel/believe in some way that others have it easier than you? Do you think the stuff God's doing through their lives is somehow better than what He has for you? If so, how does that affect your relationship with that person? How does that affect how you relate to God? What does that do to your ability to accomplish what God wants to do through you and your own life?

DAY 3

READ Matthew 26:31-33 and Romans 12:3-4.

Comparisonitis not only shows up in a feeling that others have it better than we do. It may lead us to believe we're better than others. We justify what we shouldn't do because we judge that it's not be nearly as bad as what someone else did. We listen to the lie that tells us, "What I've done isn't so bad; at least I'm not like *him/her*." *What kind of effect does this type of comparing have on your relationship with those you deem worse than you? What effect does it have on your relationship with God?*

DAY 4

Let's look at another encounter Peter had with Jesus.

READ Matthew 14:28-30.

No small thing -- Peter got out of the boat and walked on the water. *What happened immediately before he started to sink (v.30)?* Our ability to follow Jesus is undermined whenever we begin to compare our situation/circumstances to our own limitations and fears.

What might have happened if Peter kept his focus on Jesus? Certainly the wind was still there, and Peter may have been aware of it, but what could trump the power and presence of the wind?

What circumstances are you currently facing which have distracted you from focusing on Jesus? Are you focusing on your own limitations or even failures? Are you focusing on others? What do you think Jesus would say to you about that?

READ John 21:22. "You must follow me."

PRAY: Father, Your Son issued a simple call to me. He said, "Follow me." I confess that often I find myself looking at where and how You call others and become distracted by my own desire to be in control. Forgive me for shifting my focus from You and getting caught up in my circumstances. It's awfully hard to follow You when I'm looking at everyone and everything else. Forgive me and help me refocus my eyes on You.

DAY 5

READ Hebrews 12:1-2.

Where are we to fix our eyes? Whose race are we to run? What are some of the ways comparisonitis entangles us?

When we're following Christ, we're not looking at what He is or isn't doing in the lives of others, we're simply following Him. **THINK** of some practical ways you can fix your eyes on Jesus this week and the coming year. **CONSIDER** making a commitment to work through the JW devotions each week. If you aren't in a small group, get connected and join one. **SET** aside the first five minutes of each day for prayer ~ **ASK** God to re-center your heart toward Him. Perhaps you could **MEMORIZE** scripture which reminds you of God's presence in your daily life. **IDENTIFY** behaviors/attitudes which tend to lead you down the path of *comparisonitis*.

How can you stop being entangled in those behaviors/attitudes? What steps can you take? How does God want you to respond today?