

May Life Groups

#4

**The Joy Of Being You!**

(1 Samuel 18:1-11)

Compass of Salinas and Marina

This is a study of a leader who lost the joy of being the man God had created. He deteriorated slowly – that’s the way it always is.

1. Read 1 Samuel 18:1-11 slowly several times. Speed reading never produces growth or new insights.

- Who are the main characters?
- Why is Saul angry? He is king so what’s the problem? Why does he care about what the women sing about one of his servants? (Reference the verse you are using for your answer just to make sure it comes from the Bible and not our imagination!)

2. Consider this quote:

**Saul was king, but he was not happy. He was a warrior with many victories, but he was not happy. He was rich, lived in a luxurious palace, and was popular, but he was not happy because he had lost the joy of being himself. No one can be happy who has lost the joy of being themselves.**

**No one had grabbed it from Saul. He lost that joy by wishing he was someone else. You can’t have the joy of being you if you wish you were someone else!**

**Saul wished he was David. David had killed Goliath the giant; Saul had stayed on a hill watching. The women of the country sang a song about Saul and David that said: “Saul has slain thousands, and David tens of thousands.”**

**That galled Saul. It made Saul feel like a runner-up to David as a man. Despite all his assets, Saul felt he did not measure up and he lost the joy of being Saul. He wished he was David, and you can’t wish you were someone else and keep the joy of being you, can you?**

**It’s a good question, isn’t it? Do you experience joy in being you?**

**I love this picture of a garbage can with the sign that says: – “To wish you were someone else is to waste the person you are.”**

**Life is too short to spend it wishing we were someone else.**

- What is the most challenging or hard to live out part of that quote? What’s the problem with wishing you were someone else?

- (Private, so be honest) Who have you wished at one time or another you were instead of you? Maybe in another marriage, maybe with someone who had what you wished you had? So what does wishing we were someone else do to us?

3. What do you think of this quote?

**So how can you experience the joy of being you? First, stop hating your body.**

**Surveys consistently show that less than 1% of American women like their body. In fact surveys show that it borders on hatred of their body. There is this ideal version of what a**

woman should look like - - very thin, flawless and so on - - that women are bombarded with everywhere they turn.

Caroline Munker has written a book entitled When Women Stop Hating Their Bodies. In it she talks about how these ideal images of what a woman should look like, and she describes it as killing women softly.

She says there's a high cost to all of this - - eating disorders that can actually kill, prejudice against overweight people, and destruction of the self-esteem of women. Munker remarks that the great beauties of the past like Marilyn Monroe would be "considered.... fat by today's standards." Marilyn Monroe would be rejected by Victoria Secret as too fat for their runway.

You see on the screen SANITY IN AN INSANE WORLD. I love this picture of a tape measure around a person with the title "Who I am cannot be measured."

This is simply a crucial question to answer if you are to experience the joy of being you. The question is this: Who or what are you allowing to define you?

It's insane but many of us are allowing numbers to define us. For Saul it was how many he had slain compared to David. The women sang that Saul had slain thousands but David tens of thousands. Numbers. He lost the numbers game to David and lost the joy of being Saul.

Don't allow a tape measure or a scale to steal the joy of being you. You are more valuable than the number on your scale at home.

A big bank account cannot make us happy. Christine Onassis famously said "Happiness is not based on money. Our family is proof of that!"

Don't let numbers of any kind define you

On the screen I have a list of ways our society today wants to define us. I've crossed them out and put in better ideas.

~~petite~~.....intelligent  
~~tiny~~ .....kind  
~~skinny~~ .....talented  
~~muscles~~ .....sense of humor  
~~thin~~.....loving

Numbers are not God's way to measure you.

- Underline the most important sentence: say why you think so and what is THE APPLICATION FOR US?
- What do you think I mean when I ask, "Who or what are you allowing to DEFINE YOU?"
- That could be a tape measure or money, or it could be your job or status, or it could be your critics and people who do not like you.  
Write down at least 2 of the most common ways people allow themselves to BE DEFINED?
- So tell us in a few sentences what the problem is with allowing that? How does it affect us?

4. Why did Saul lose his joy at being King and Saul? The following is my answer.

**Secondly, joy is getting your eyes off others!**

**That is what Saul would NOT DO. He kept his eyes on David, constantly comparing himself to David, and of course, he lost the joy of being Saul.**

**A lot of people have the habit of comparison, and the problem is this: Comparing is counting another person's blessings and IGNORING your own! And of course it is hard to like being you if you are doing that.**

**I wonder: have any of us been making that mistake lately? Have you been counting someone else's blessings instead of your own?**

**It might surprise you that envy is 1 of the 7 deadly sins according to the Bible. Envy a sin? How? It doesn't seem to be that bad. Well, it is actually ingratitude to God for all that He has given us. Envy is a form of complaint against God for shortchanging us in life.**

**St Augustine said that envy is the only sin that gives not even a single second of happiness. He said every other sin gives some kind of short term or at least momentary happiness. Even anger can momentarily give a person satisfaction. But envy gives not even a single second of happiness.**

**In fact, envy is do-it-yourself misery because it focuses on what other people have that you do not.**

**In my research last week I came across an article about 2 universities that tracked students who were frequent Facebook users. The surveys show that people were considerably less happy after time on Facebook, that they were critical of their own life after spending time on Facebook reading about the life of other people.**

**Why? Comparison. Counting the blessings of others instead of your own. Envy is a deadly sin because it kills the joy of being you.**

**Thomas Aquinas defined envy as "Sorrow at someone else's blessing." Gordon Vidal, the famous author once said, "Every time a friend of mine succeeds, I die a little."**

**Comparison steals the joy of being you.**

- In a couple of sentences summarize what that quote is saying, and do you agree or not?
- Comparing ourselves to others in a national sport. Ads, TV, mags, Facebook – so many things encourage it! It is a loser's game. Why ?
- So what is your best advice for staying out 'of the game of comparison'. What would help us 'not to play that game'?
- As honest as you can be, how could playing the comparison game damage the joy of a marriage or being a parent?

5. So what is the cure? Consider this:

**There is only one cure for envy. It is the practice of being thankful for all the blessings you do have. Even bad things that happen help us see the good times more clearly. Isn't that true?**

**I have ministered to a lot of people over the years who are dying. And I can say that not one of them talked about how they would miss their car or traveling or their clothes.**

**Without exception they talked about missing their pet, their family, and things like the smell of coffee and sunshine and birds singing. Things most people take for granted.**

**Even walking. People take walking for granted...until they cannot walk. Every time I leave the hospital after visiting a very ill person, I thank God for being able to walk and to drink all the water I want at dinner that night.**

**We are all blessed in the little things of life...that in the end are the best things. Stop counting the blessings of other people. Thank God before you sleep tonight for all the little things in your life that are a blessing and be glad you are you!**

- Underline the most important sentence and say why it is the cure for the miserable habit of comparison and envy.
- So on a scale of 1 to 10, 1 being a consistent complainer and 10 being utterly thankful, 1 being a glass half full person and 10 being a glass is full person, how would you rate yourself.
- Now that we have all exaggerated and looked good to each other, honestly look at your prayers. Are you mostly a complainer to God or thankful?  
Do your prayers help God see the problems He needs to fix, or do you have a lot of things you say thanks for everyday to Him – like for your pastor and his pretty shirts and that your pastor is not a slovenly, frumpy dresser but coooooool. Just helping you get the point.

Pray for each other