

TRAPS: *The TRAP of Comparison*

Galatians 6:1-5

- **The Daily Upward Look:** Over 70% of Americans use social media daily, creating a relentless environment for what psychologists call "upward social comparison"—the habit of comparing our behind-the-scenes reality to someone else's carefully curated highlight reel.
- **The Mental Health Toll:** The U.S. Surgeon General has issued warnings that this continuous cycle of comparison is directly associated with depressive symptoms, profound anxiety and deep dissatisfaction with our own lives.
- **The Financial Facade:** Financial psychologists note that the pressure to "keep up with the Joneses" is driving families into record levels of consumer debt. We are spending money we do not have, to buy things we do not need, to impress people we might not even like.

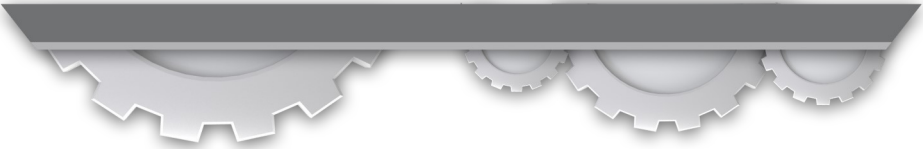
1. **COMPARISON DESTROYS TRUE COMMUNITY:**
When we are caught in the *TRAP* of comparison, we view people, even People of Faith, competitively rather than seeing them as members of our spiritual family (vv. 1-3).

Two Important “To Do’s”

- **Be a Healer, Not a Critic** – In this season of so much environmental stress and vicarious trauma, what people need now more than ever are healers, not critics (vv. 1-3).
- **Be Gentle with Each Other** – Because gentleness is a facet of the Fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:23), God intends for us to apply it as a spiritually medicinal salve to those who have wounded themselves in the world (vv. 1-3).

2. **COMPARISON DISTORTS OUR TRUE CALLING:**
When we engage in the process of using other people as our standard of measurement, we prevent ourselves from walking in the fulfillment of what the Lord has called us to do (v. 4).

(over please)



Watch Where You're Looking

- ▶ **Don't Look Outward** – When measuring yourself, do not look from side to side. It typically leads either to pride, “Look at how much better off I am than they are.” Or, it leads to complaint, “I do not have what they have, so I cannot do what they are doing.” Neither of these outcomes help us responsibly live out our divine calling (v. 4).
- ▶ **Look Upward** – If our desire is to do what God has called us to do, then we have to commit to looking upward to the One who has created and called us to do it (v. 4)!

3. **COMPARISON DISTRACTS FROM OUR TRUE CARGO:** When we engage in the *TRAP* of comparison, it leads us to put down what God has given us, because we misbelieve that what God has given us is not as glamorous or important as what someone else has (vv. 2-5).

No Contradiction, Just an Amazing Conclusion

- ▶ **We Are to Carry Each Other's Burdens** – We are told to do this because the Greek word for burdens is indicative of a weight that no one should have to carry on their own. This is a command (v. 2).
- ▶ **We Are to Carry Our Own Load** – We are told to do this because the Greek word for load, *phortion* [*for-TEE-on*], is indicative of a person's bag, as in a soldier's satchel or backpack. It is something that has been designed for us to carry on our own (v. 5).

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