

## **Why do some people seem to be more successful at living better and more enjoyable lives than others?**

Part of the reason is because some people have self-image thoughts that are based more on God's Truth about them than are the self-image thoughts others have. Acting on God's Truth about us versus Satan's lies about who we are in Christ often happens inadvertently, but not always. Regardless, just because someone has a healthy, or Truthful, conscious self-image thought, doesn't mean they do not have other self-image thoughts based on Satan's lies and deceptions. It also does not mean that later they may not stumble into embracing self-image thoughts based on Satan's lies and deceptions. It doesn't mean that in some part of their lives there isn't a whole bunch of pain and discomfort. On the other hand, even people who openly reject Christ can have aspects of their lives which are based on God's Truth of who they can be in Christ, even though their lives will never be whole without a relationship with Him!

Be cautious in judging others based on what they show you in their lives. People usually hide discomforts; pain is NOT what most people reveal. Regardless, the point is to be able to act on God's Truth about you consciously and consistently. Your consistency hinges on how well you discern the Holy Spirit's guidance, which works to change, grow and strengthen you during trials.

There is another Supplemental Information question that deals with learning new skills. You may want to read that if you haven't already because it addresses how we often look at the lives of others and compare their experiences to ours. It is important to recognize when you are comparing your experience to someone else's experience, and when it becomes uncomfortable or undesirable. The comparing aspect is something the mind does. This thinking dynamic can easily be of the old self. You'll know when it is of the old self because it will stir up self-judgment, inadequacy, guilt, anger and jealousy within you. Be alert for if/when your heart is disturbed. The heart disturbance happens when your unconscious thoughts contain a personal UNtruth (an attack by Satan). Because the Holy Spirit hears these thoughts (John 16:13), He disturbs your heart in order to get your attention (1 John 3:18-24).

Comparing yourself or your life experience to someone else or their life experience can be a difficult habit to overcome. It is certainly spiritually dangerous because the person you are comparing yourself to is *not you*. By definition, you are looking at someone else's life from the outside and are unable to understand the sum of all their experiences. To assume you are able to assess their experiences fully, and that you are able to justly the way you compare you and them, is a perception based on personal UNtruth. This thinking will trouble your heart.

Unhealthy comparisons usually make it hard to accept personal responsibility for the self-image thought which is driving the comparison. If your heart is disturbed, then it is likely the comparison is spiritually off and your self-image thought is not of Christ. If transforming your heart in such trials is going to be possible, you must accept personal responsibility for the comparison and discern the Holy Spirit's guidance for you. Seek out what the Spirit would have you to change in you so that you can be at peace with who you are in Christ!

As a result of comparisons, our concepts of "personal responsibility" usually get skewed by our concepts of right/wrong, good/bad. This is because as we grow up, we usually learn to spend a lot of time judging almost everything and everyone else as right/wrong, good/bad, except us (and even when we do judge us, we are often judging in ungodly ways). These old-self dynamics have a home in the unconscious parts of our being, and they leave little room for constructive self-improvement that can come from putting on the new self. Listening to and

discerning the guidance of the Spirit of God with our hearts during these trials can reveal what is in the unconscious parts of our minds in the moments it needs to be transformed.

Our concept of what kinds of things make a healthy and enjoyable life is influenced very heavily by society, our cultures, our friends (and what they want based on their values), and our families (and what they want based on their values). There are challenges a person faces based on whether they have more or have less according to the world. There is nothing inherently wrong with any of these things; however, when any of them lead to a heart disturbance, you will know God is speaking to you about something. The question is what is He wanting to change in you? What God promises us and offers us is inner peace, rest, and connection with Him. In a given trial, are you in God's Truth about you or are you believing in Satan's UNtruth about you?