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The Cure for a Competitive Spirit

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Comparisons are odious. If we compare ourselves to someone higher on the food chain we feel inadequate. If we gaze at someone who has less money, education, power, good looks or toys, we feel superior. Let's not kid ourselves, we all play comparisons. And we're not the only ones.

The tiny pebbles and small white shells of the Galilean beach crunched under the sandals of the two men as they walked beside one another. A third followed a short distance behind them.

Three Stinging Questions

Three times Jesus asked Peter a stinging question: "Do you love me?" Three times Peter assured the Lord of his love. Rather than rebuking Peter, or shaming him for his past denials, Jesus instructed Peter to feed his sheep. *The Lord gave Peter forgiveness and a mission*. The fisher of men would spend the remainder his life caring for God's people.

After the Lord spoke, Peter glanced over his shoulder and saw John. Like a little brother, he always wanted to be close to Jesus, even when Jesus spoke privately with Peter.

The Rock, as Jesus called Peter, heard the Lord's command but had a question of his own for Jesus. Pointing at John, he asked, "Lord, what about him?" (John 21:21). Peter wanted to know what Jesus would do with John while he fed the Lord's flock. Would he build a massive following or humbly serve Peter?

The ugliness of Peter's competitive spirit might have stained that page of history. But Jesus used Peter's question to give us an antidote for such self-centered thoughts.

Look to Jesus, not other people

Jesus answered, 'If I want him to remain alive until I return, what is that to you? You must follow me'" (John 21:22). In other words, "Peter, don't worry about my plans for John, look to me."

The next time you catch yourself looking over your shoulder and comparing yourself with others, look to Jesus . . . and follow him closely.