

Standout

I've been thinking about what stands out to me.

- Saw this guy with an amazingly colourful shirt
- There's a guy at my gym with red curly hair
- A guy at my gym who does interesting exercises but I can't work out what's he'd doing it for
- Saw a picture of a beautiful beach in Italy that grabbed my attention
- I'm so grateful for the beautiful weather recently – so much sunshine
- I saw a watch that grabbed my attention the other day – did a bit of research and changed my mind – not everything that grabs my attention is worth my attention
- I saw this t-shirt for sale and loved it
- Saw a beautifully cooked steak about 2 inches thick – that really grabbed my attention

Things grab our attention because they stand out. That dress, those shoes, that car, that house, that person's bank balance. **Not everything that grabs my attention is worth my attention.**

Not everything that stands out is standing out because it's good. In church life there are so many things clamoring for my attention. Sometimes I need to physically turn my eyes away from them and intentionally and deliberately look to God for His wisdom, His guidance and His comfort. If I didn't take my attention off the troubles the toll of human suffering would drown me. I'd be no use to others. It's not I don't care I just know God care even more than me and He can handle the pressure.

Some people may stand out for the wrong reasons. But others stand out for the right reasons.

One such man stood out to me about 15 years ago. The story of Phil Temple. Others have been Sam Cousins, Mark Harvey, Jessica Abby, Rose Betts, they all stood out to me when I saw them. They had potential I've been able to develop and direct to God's glory.

Others I see stand out – I struggle as they have underlying character issues they are not willing to deal with just yet. The path to significance block for the time being.

Daniel 1: 3 – 4 is a historical account of the kinds of young men that drew the attention of King Nebuchadnezzar ruler of Babylon. They stood out to the King!

“Then the king ordered Ashpenaz, chief of his court officials, to bring into the king's service some of the Israelites from the royal family and the nobility young men without any physical defect, handsome, showing aptitude for every kind of learning, well informed, quick to understand, and qualified to serve in the king's palace.”

- Firstly, they were from the royal family and the nobility.
- They had no physical defect
- They were handsome
- They showed an aptitude for every kind of learning
- They were well informed
- They were quick to understand
- They qualified to serve – in the King's palace

An amazing list of things that stood out to the King. These are great things to be in possession of. These things caused Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah to literally stand out to the King and his handpicked officials. These boys grabbed someone attention!

- You may feel like no one is looking at you.
- You may feel there is nothing about you that makes you stand out
- Maybe you are very critical of yourself and think little of your talents and gifts
- Maybe you have allowed feeling of rejection to overwhelm you in life
- Maybe you've compared yourself continually to others and discovered there are a lot of people "better" than you. In your comparisons you find you don't measure up to others, you don't have what others have,
- Maybe you're a realist – you look at others and think – well I may not be as good as them but at least I'm not as bad as others I've seen.

There is comparison where we come off feeling better about ourselves but you do so at the expense of others. I do it at the gym all the time – so do you. It's a fruitless exercise – pun intended.

2 Corinthians 10:12 says, "When they measure themselves by themselves and compare themselves with themselves, they are not wise."

Living Bible puts it this way, "Their trouble is that they are only comparing themselves with each other and measuring themselves against their own little ideas. What stupidity!"

Paul clearly here discourages us from comparison – it's not wise to do so. Not everything that grabs my attention is worth my attention. In fact it is destructive on many levels. But we do it all the time!

It drives me crazy sometimes to see how photogenic some people are – how effortless cool they always look in a baggy t-shirt and ripped jeans, what awesome Instagram photos where they are featured in wearing that trendy hat! I'm frankly annoyed they are so skinny, eat anything they want, have a flat stomach, and just always seem to get great haircuts every single time!!!! Ha!! I'm only joking – well partly joking.

Making comparisons is nothing new and the results have never changed.

Cain compared himself to Abel and was so upset he murdered his brother

King Saul was upset as people compared him to David after the slaying of Goliath. He became mentally imbalanced with depression and schizophrenic behaviour, tried numerous times to kill him.

Joseph upset his brothers to the point they were going to kill him because they thought their father favoured him over them.

Jesus' disciples struggled with comparisons too led to arguments and strained relationships

When we compare ourselves with others we are not walking by faith. Remember not everything that grabs my attention is worth my attention. Paul said it's not wise. In fact it's stupidity. Comparing ourselves with others is not a fruitful activity. We need to stop scrolling through everyone else's life and start living our own. There will always be someone out there better than you, better looking than you, have bigger muscles than you, smarter than you ... and the comparisons just go on!!

When other people make comparisons about you. In their minds you've come off second best, 3rd best, last! But again their opinion of you is not valid if it is based on comparison. Not everything that grabs my attention is worth my attention.

Have you ever felt you were being compared to others? Not nice is it? The boss makes your life tough. Your teacher thinks you're an idiot. Your friends cause you to question your dress sense or make up decisions. Not a bad idea but never allow them to make you feel like a second class person because you're not as well dressed as they are.

Maybe that boy or girl rejected you – don't allow their opinion of you to form your identity! Maybe someone has made a racist comment it says more about them than you! In families where one sibling is compared to another is downright horrifying.

One day my wife and I were making the bed – I was seriously instructing her how to do hospital corners. I compared her efforts with my mother's efforts. She asked if I'd like to give my mother a call to come and visit us!!

1. Run your race

Hebrews 12: 1 – 2 says TPT, "As for us, we have all of these great witnesses who encircle us like clouds. So we must let go of every wound that has pierced us and the sin we so easily fall into. Then we will be able to run life's marathon race with passion and determination, for the path has been already marked out [or appointed for us] before us."

There is a circle of people in Heaven cheering you on!! Yes that's right!!
So let go of comparisons and everything else that hinders us.
Then run your race – do it with passion and determination
Because we have a path already marked out for us – appointed for us

Back to the gym. Yes I do cardio, cycling, rowing, the tread mill and the stair master – but I'm not going anywhere – I'm just getting sweaty! Scripture encourages us to run too – run our race – the one appointed for us – the one marked out before us. We are not called to run someone else's race.

2. Be Empathetic it's different from comparison.

Romans 12: 15 says, **English Standard Version**, "Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep."

WE rejoice with others who rejoice – that's tough some times
We weep with others who weep – yes that tough sometimes too
Don't get them mixed up – that leads to certain destruction of spirit.

Proverbs 4:23 NIV "Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it."

TPT, "So above all, guard the affections of your heart, for they affect all that you are. Pay attention to the welfare of your innermost being, for from there flows the wellspring of life."

Not everything that grabs my attention is worth my attention. Be careful.

"COMPARISON IS THE THIEF OF JOY." Comparison kills contentment dead in its tracks – it leads to feeling of rejection, a lack of self-worth, it leads to depression, it leads to anxiety. We decide we're not as good as someone else or that we're better than someone else and we do it for the most ridiculous reasons.

1 Timothy 6:6 says, "But godliness with contentment is great gain."

3. Keep Perspective: How God sees you is important.

What if I said to you this morning that God has no favourites? Maybe you'd disagree based upon your own experience. Maybe you'd say straight out – not true – look at that guy!! Look at that girl!! They have way more than me. Not everything that grabs my attention is worth my attention. Be careful. Be careful to not base your theology on your experiences too.

Maybe they do have more than you – maybe they worked harder than you. Maybe they had better opportunities than you. Maybe they had different priorities to you. Maybe they were more inclined to study than you. Maybe they were blessed by genetics to have a nicer looking face than you. Maybe they determined to carry themselves differently. Maybe they decided to eat differently to you. Maybe they decided to exercise regularly. Maybe they are more informed than you and quicker to catch on than you. Ok!!!! Case closed. God has favourites!! Really??

Others may have more than us – maybe they made decisions to achieve those things. Maybe they had a great family inheritance from godly parents. Maybe they had help from others in their lives. Maybe wealthy parents helped buy them their house, car or college degree. Maybe they had greater talents than you. Maybe their business is growing quicker than yours. Maybe they've decided to work harder than you. Maybe they've risen in the company faster than you have. Ok!!! Case closed. God has favourites.

4. God has no favourites.

But what if I said God doesn't have favourites. Maybe these other people have a different race to run. Maybe their personal decisions led them on a different track to you. Maybe they've responded to opportunities differently than you. Maybe they had different priorities than you. Maybe they were born in a difficult country! So many maybes!

God's word says really clearly, **Romans 2: 9 – 11**, "... glory, honour and peace for everyone who does good: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile. ***For God does not show favouritism.***"

Peter when he went to the house of Cornelius the first non-Jew to receive the message of Jesus and His salvation said these words, **Acts 10: 34 – 35** TPT says, "Peter said, "Now I know for certain that God doesn't show favouritism with people but treats everyone on the same basis. It makes no difference what race of people one belongs to. If they show deep reverence for God, and are committed to doing what's right, they are acceptable before him.

God doesn't show favouritism – He is not the God of hypocrites! Jesus said, **John 3: 16**, "Whosoever believes will be saved." There are no favourites with God. His love is the constant of the universe.

Psalms 17: 8 says we are "the apple of His eye" which means we are precious, valued, and important and cherished – each and every one of us. NO one misses out on the love of God.

Matthew 10: 29 – 31, TPT, "You can buy two sparrows for only a copper coin, yet not even one sparrow falls from its nest without the knowledge of your Father. Aren't you worth much more to God than many sparrows? So don't worry. ***For your Father cares deeply about even the smallest detail of your life.***"

For your Father cares deeply about even the smallest detail of your life.

Isaiah 49: 15 – 16 says, "Can a mother forget the baby at her breast and have no compassion on the child she has borne? Though she may forget, I will not forget you! See, I have engraved you on the palms of my hands."

1 John 2:2 says, "He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world."

You – he died for you. To our God in Heaven we stood out. In the whole universe – galaxy after galaxy, in the midst of a hundred billion stars – Jesus love reached out to us. We stand out as the object of His great love. A love that moved Him to offer His life a ransom for many.

- Never doubt you have your Father’s attention.
- Never doubt you are an object of His love.
- Never doubt His love will overcome every sin, mistake and failing
- Never doubt you are special – the apple of His eye – He watched you as you were formed in your mother’s womb – He will never forget you!
- Never doubt that your prayers go unheard
- Never doubt that He will stand with you in every test, trial and in every tribulation.
- Never doubt His love for you

Stop trying to be like everyone else they are already taken – Be you because you are unique – you have a race to run – you have a destiny to fulfil. God’s hand is on your life – if there is breath in your lungs then He’s not finished with you yet! Yes!!! Live your best life!! Yes seek to be as successful as you can in life – but not because your being motivated by comparison!

It was you who He chased after, You He wooed to Himself, you He pursued while you were in darkness and hurt, You He sought when you were in your pain. Like a lost sheep Jesus leaves the fold to come after you to find you. There is no darkness too thick, no rejection too great, no sin too shameful He won’t come after you – He will rescue you, He will save you. Our Jesus has a certain set of skills – He will find you, He will seek to grab your attention and if you look hard enough you’ll see He is amazingly outstanding and deserving of your attention. Jesus – the Light of the world!!