

Alive and Free Week 4 | Ryan Wekenman | 9.30-10.1

Weekly Study

SHARE

If you could have any superpower for a day, what would it be?

What's one thing that made you smile this week?

Is there anything God has been stirring in your heart this last week? If so, what is it?

GROW

Welcome to week four of Alive and Free. In this series, we've been talking about killing the things that are killing us. The key verse for the series is John 10:10, where Jesus says, "The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full" (John 10:10). Jesus promises us that it's possible to live a full and abundant life, but there is a very present war at play trying to prevent us from living that life.

In Week One, we talked about addiction. In Week Two, we talked about fear. Week Three, we talked about distraction. This week Ryan talked about comparison. Before we get into things, take a moment to recap the entire sermon series by answering these questions.

What has stuck out to you the most throughout this series? Why?

What is one way that God is using this series to speak to you and how is He using that to change areas in your heart?

Read Mark 9:33-41

What stuck out to you from this encounter Jesus had with his disciples?

In the passage you just read, Jesus confronts the disciples after seeing them arguing on the road as they were traveling to Capernaum. The disciples didn't respond to Jesus because they were arguing about who was the greatest. In that moment, they realized that the one who asked this question was the one who set the standard for greatness. Jesus, as he often does, begins to use this very moment to teach and build up his disciples.

Jesus calls out the comparison battle between the disciples while also urging them to aspire to a different type of greatness, one that the world doesn't promote. They wanted to know who was

superior and sought to elevate their own status, but Jesus called them out and then redefined what true greatness looks like.

Where do you see yourself comparing your life to others? Do you think this is something Jesus is trying to call out in you, and if so, why?

MOVE

Read Ecclesiastes 4:4

Do you believe that the ways in which you compare yourself are meaningless, just as this verse suggests?

In Mark 9:33-41, we see the disciples comparing themselves. Anytime this happens among people, there are always two groups: those who walk away insecure and those who walk away prideful. This verse in Ecclesiastes shows us that these comparisons are meaningless, and Jesus reinforces this in Mark 9:33-41. Ryan outlines four steps that we, as followers of Jesus, can take away from this interaction between Jesus and his disciples.

STEP 1: CALL IT OUT

You can't fight something you can't see. Comparison loves to live in the dark. Unfortunately, we can't see it. We're going in blind. It is going to win 100% of the time. But if you can see it, it may still win at times, but at least you have a fighting chance. The first thing you have to do is call it out. The comparison trap is dangerous, and it's time to talk about it.

STEP 2: REDEFINE GREATNESS

There is more than a bit of irony here. They are with Jesus, the greatest of all time, the GOAT. It's like if we were throwing the football with Tom Brady and started asking, "Who do you think is the greatest, you or me, Tom?" It's silly. Let's all get on the same page here – JESUS wins. If there is a "greatness" debate, it's Jesus. So how about this: Let's let the greatest of all time define greatness for us. Jesus, in Mark 9:35, begins to show us that when we love, serve, and put others before ourselves, that is what greatness looks like.

STEP 3: CHEER THEM ON

Imagine the dream you've been chasing for years. Perhaps you want to start a gym, or a business. Maybe you want to do something creative, like starting a podcast or writing a book – whatever it is. Then, someone else gets the break you've been hoping for, and you find yourself

yelling out to God, comparing yourself to them. That's the comparison trap. The fastest way out of it is to learn to cheer for them, instead of sitting in frustration and bitterness. When someone else achieves success, stop feeling threatened by it. That's a scarcity mindset. Instead, celebrate it.

STEP 4: RUN YOUR RACE

If you are looking to anything but Jesus to define your worth, you are running a race you'll never win. Begin to view your greatness differently; perhaps change your mindset to redefine what greatness looks like – serving others and keeping your eyes on Jesus.

What are some ways we can begin to redefine greatness in our own lives in a practical way? Perhaps it's being thankful for where God has placed us and appreciating what He's doing in our lives.

Where are some personal areas in our lives where we might need to start encouraging others instead of feeling threatened by their success?

What are some practical ways each one of us can refocus our attention back onto Jesus and run our own race, instead of constantly sitting in the comparison game?

PRAY

Take a moment to discuss specific prayer needs with the group, and then spend some time praying together as a Group.