



## Comparing

by Tom Kraeuter, Hillsboro, Missouri

*Jesus said to him, "If it is my will that he remain until I come, what is that to you? You follow me!" (John 21:22)*

Jesus made this statement to Peter. To put it into context, Jesus had just given Peter an indication of the manner in which Peter would die. But Jesus' words in that regard sound somewhat ominous: being taken someplace Peter didn't want to go and having his hands stretched out. That likely didn't sound like the most inviting scenario to Peter's mind. Perhaps, it was a bit too reminiscent of the crucifixion of Jesus he had recently witnessed.

Yet, in the midst of their dialogue, Peter apparently noticed John somewhere nearby. John may have been nibbling on a bit of bread from the breakfast they had just enjoyed together. We don't know for sure exactly what he was doing, but Peter asked Jesus a question. "What about him?" The question in Peter's mind seems to be, *Now that I know about my future, what about his?*

That's when Jesus responded, "What is that to you? You follow me!" (John 21:22)

As human beings, we have a tendency to compare. We compare our lifestyles to those of others. We compare our families to the families of our friends and neighbors. We compare our heights, weights, bank accounts, possessions, skills, educations, talents, speed, vocabularies, eye colors, shoe sizes, histories, circumstances, and more, with those around us. We want to know how we measure up against others. We want to know if, by worldly standards, we are above average. And, if we're below the average, we want to know what needs to happen to push us higher.

In the midst of our comparisons, though, Jesus would ask us, "What is that to you? You follow me!"

His goal isn't to make us better than someone else. He didn't come so we might have a higher standard of living than the other guy, or that we might be smarter or better looking than someone else. He came to give us eternal life.

For those of us involved in the worship ministries of our respective churches, this can strike especially close to home. We, too, have a tendency to compare. Musically speaking, we want to be the best. We certainly want to be better than others. Above average. Seen as gifted or talented. We'd like to be noticed for our musical abilities.

Of course, we don't generally admit such things publically. And if we talk about our abilities, we at least couch it in good Christian lingo. "Whatever abilities I have are gifts from God." Yet, we generally don't mind being perceived as better than others.

In the midst of this, I think Jesus would say, "Don't worry about them. You just follow me!"

There is no need for you to be seen as better than someone else. It's not necessary that we get noticed for our talents. What is necessary is that we follow the Lord. And, for us, we also have the extreme privilege of assisting others in following the Lord, too.

Don't worry about being the best, or even better than others. Let's follow the Lord and do our best to help others around us to follow Him, also.

*Lord, forgive me for so easily wanting to compare myself with others. Cause me to be less focused on comparisons, and more focused on You. Amen.*

### GOING DEEPER:

1. What have you found that helps you avoid the competitive mindset when it comes to those on the worship team?
2. How do we balance not being competitive with doing our very best?