



Dancing To Jazz: Like Nobody Is Watching | June 13, 2018

Discussion Guide

The Scoop

We spend so much time worrying about what others think of us. But what if God wants us to live in such a way that we can dance like nobody's watching?

Key Verses

Romans 12:2 (NIV)

"Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will."

Discussion

To a teenager, high school sports can seem like the biggest deal. Tryouts can make or break your entire year depending on if you make the team or not. We put our best foot forward, try to outperform others, and hope that the coach sees everything we do right. In fact, sometimes we even might stop to make sure the coach is paying attention before we do something good to make sure we get noticed and not passed by. We are so preoccupied making sure they see what we can do, that we often miss the point of being in the game.

1. Did you participate in high school sports? Do you remember tryouts? What was that experience like for you and does this idea resonate?
2. Where do you think we first learn that we must impress others to be noticed? In and from culture, our friends, families, etc.?

We do this same thing in the rest of our lives and in our faith as well. But when we get caught up in our own performance, however, the irony is that we don't actually do our best. We limit our impact and miss out on experiences and joy that come from turning the attention off of ourselves and towards others. When we do this, we start to gain an interest in people outside of our own skin. It makes us less selfish and enables us to be more present.

3. Have you experienced this in other areas of your life as well? In your job? In college? In your social circles?
4. Why do you think turning the attention off ourselves enables us to be more present and gain interest in others?

In Romans 12:2, the Bible tells us not to copy the behavior and customs of the world, but to let God transform us into a new person. Most of us are so worried about ourselves and our own reputations. But when this is the way we live our lives, it actually leaves little room for God to work. When we focus our attention on God and what He wants, however, something inside of us starts to change. We start to show up not simply to impress others, but to live into God's perfect and pleasing will for us.

5. Why do you think God is more interested in the renewing of our minds than the behavior and customs of this world? What might He be up to in us and others as we allow Him to transform our ways of thinking?
6. What area(s) of your life, where you have focused too much on yourself or impressing others, do you need to surrender to God and ask Him for a new way of thinking?

What's Next?

In today's world, thinking of ourselves less is a little bit of a crazy and provocative idea. We live in a world that tells us we should prove ourselves to others, that we must behave in a certain way to be noticed or accepted, and without even knowing it, we develop social customs in the groups we are part of that support this way of thinking.

This week, as you live out your faith, consider the places that you still hold on to "self." Call attention to the places that drag you down, and make you feel worried or anxious because you are so focused on yourself and what others think of you. Think about one area of your life you could lay before God, and ask him to change your way of thinking and the way that you engage others.