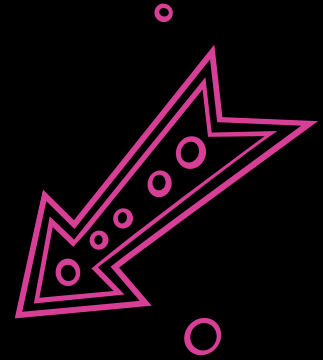
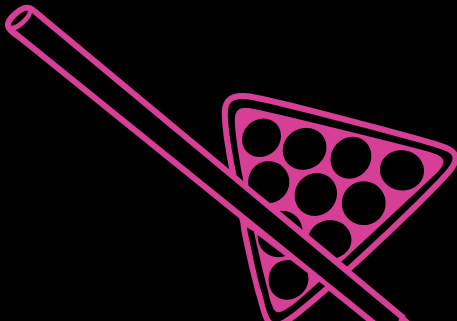
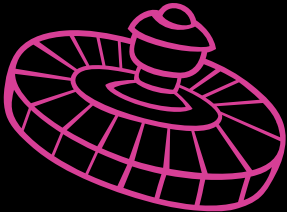


BAD BET 5



**PLAY THE
COMPARISON
GAME**



NAME THE GAME

In Vegas, some games have better odds than others. But one game that has the worst odds of all isn't confined to the glitz and glamour of hotels on the Strip. It's the comparison game, in which those playing try to judge their value based on how well they stack up with other people. While this game can be found everywhere in our culture, the chances of winning it are terrible. In fact, you're guaranteed to lose.

- ◆ What session or topic from this series has stuck with you the most? Why?
- ◆ Have you ever won something (a game, sporting match, or activity) in which the odds were stacked against you? What happened?



SET THE TABLE

WATCH THE VIDEO FOR SESSION 5

Use the space below to take notes (or doodle, whatever works best for you).



SHUFFLE THE DECK

- ◆ Why do you think it's so common to get pulled into the comparison game in our culture? What fuels it?
- ◆ Where do you most feel the pressure to measure up? Is it with parenting, your appearance, the house, spirituality, or somewhere else?

Read **Luke 18:9-14**.

- ◆ How do you see the comparison game popping up in this passage? What do you think Jesus' main point is with this parable?
- ◆ What is the difference between humility and inferiority? How can you discern the difference, either in others or in your own words and actions?

Read **2 Corinthians 10:12**.

- ◆ Paul writes that measuring and comparing ourselves to others is not wise. How have you seen the comparison game rob you of joy, peace, and kindness?
- ◆ Pastor and author Craig Groeschel said, "The quickest way to kill anything special is to compare it to something else." Where do you need to be careful in squashing something special through comparison? Is it with a child, your spouse, a unique challenge you face, or something else?

One of the ways we need to avoid the comparison game is in our journey with God. We don't need to compare ourselves with where others are. Our job is to be faithful with taking our best next step today. Take five minutes to do the **Closer Look Activity** on pages 42-43.

- ◆ When you think of your own faith journey, what do you think your next step is? Is there a way this group can help you to take that next step?
- ◆ Let's take a moment to celebrate what God has done over these past few weeks as well as some next steps taken as a result of this group. Name one person who shared or did something that encouraged you in a particular way.
- ◆ Are you open to continuing with this group during the spring Groups semester? If yes, what would you like to see happen in this group? If you're not sure, that's okay—what are some considerations you're thinking about?

Close in prayer. Thank God for all He did through *The Gamble*. Pray that God would help each of you take your next step in your faith journey.

CLOSER LOOK ACTIVITY

No one wins at the comparison game, especially when it comes to spiritual growth. Transformation is an imperfect journey with a promised destination. God tells us that He will complete the good work He has started in us, but on this side of heaven we all have next steps to take and our journeys will be full of ups and downs.

That's why our focus should be on what next step would help us move forward in our relationship with Jesus. And we should celebrate any step forward we or others take, no matter how big or small.

Take a moment to think through next steps in two areas: your next step individually and your next step in this group.

MY NEXT STEPS

Check any of the following that apply:

- Start a relationship with Jesus.
- Get baptized.
- Do *Established* (a study to help you gain confidence in faith).
- Read the Bible more regularly.
- Start each day with prayer.
- Pray with my spouse or family every day.
- Attend weekend services more regularly.
- Start serving on a team.
- Lead a new group.
- Discover my unique gifting, strengths, and purpose.
- Find a counselor or a coach.
- Ask a few casual friends to be comrades.
- Say “no” to some thing(s) so I can live into my best “yes.”
- Invite a friend or family member to church.
- Learn how to share the Gospel.
- Read a book or listen to a podcast to learn more about God, theology, or an area of interest.
- Forgive someone.
- Forgive myself.
- Start giving regularly to the church.
- Find an organization in the community you want to support financially.
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Out of all the ones you checked, which do you want to focus on first? Do you need help getting started?

MY NEXT STEPS IN THIS GROUP

Groups aren't just about one person or leader. They are a community committed to each other as they grow spiritually. Each person has a role to play to "own" the group.

Are you open to committing to this group for the rest of this season?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

Check any of the following ways you would be willing to help own this group experience.

- I am willing to bring snacks to group meetings.
- I am willing to plan a social gathering for our group.
- I am willing to organize a fun activity for us to do outside of group time.
- I am willing to close our group in prayer.
- I am willing to organize a prayer list for our group.
- I am willing to invite others into our group.
- I am willing to host group meetings in my home.
- I am willing to coordinate a service project for our group.
- I am willing to lead a discussion every once in a while.

DAILY DEVOTIONAL



READ

PSALM 139:13-14

For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well.

REFLECT

God made you unique and special. He intimately knows you and wants a relationship with you.



READ

2 CORINTHIANS 10:12

We do not dare classify or compare ourselves with some who commend themselves. When they measure themselves by themselves and compare themselves with themselves, they are not wise.

REFLECT

Don't play the comparison game today. It will rob you of peace, joy, and life.



READ

2 CORINTHIANS 10:18

For it is not the one who commends himself who is approved, but the one whom the Lord commends.

REFLECT

Don't seek the approval of other people. Seek God's.



READ

MATTHEW 7:4-5

How can you say to your brother, “Let me take the speck out of your eye,” when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother’s eye.

REFLECT

Is there a way you are focusing on the struggles and sins of someone else? Take a moment to think through and confess your struggles and sins to God, who is ready to forgive.



READ

LUKE 14:11

For all those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.

REFLECT

Humility isn’t thinking less of yourself. It’s thinking less about yourself. Take a moment to focus on God, worshipping Him for who He is.