

God's Message to Those Who Feel Like a Failure

There is a direct correlation between a Christian's proclivity to wear a mask and God's proclivity to rip it off.

While this is difficult, remember that it is God's grace. God is a merciful God who, in His mercy, rips off our masks and stomps on our hidden agendas.

A kind God allows us to sin ... and sometimes sin big. Well, maybe it would be better to say that a kind God will clearly reveal your sin to you or He will clearly reveal it to others. He will reveal the greatness of your sin to you or allow you to sin greatly.

An example: Nathan confronted David about his murder and adultery in 2 Samuel 12. If that doesn't make you wince, there's something wrong with you. Then David writes one of the most profound confessions found in the entire Bible, Psalm 51.

Read that psalm and watch God ripping the mask off David. It will give hope to the great sinner (that would be you and me) that God is a gracious and forgiving God. And not only that, you will know the source of David's power, the reason he could write such incredible and moving psalms, and why he is called "a man after [God's] own heart" (1 Sam. 13:14).

The greatest gift that God gives to the people he loves is their sin ... when they know it. And the greatest curse to a Christian is that Christian's obedience ... when he or she knows it.

As I understand it, the Bible teaches that people are sinners because we sin ... all of us. Sin, rebellion and disobedience have infiltrated the fiber of every bit of God's creation and all of God's creatures. That's not because God likes sin. He

hates sin because it is destructive and dangerous to everything that is important. It isn't because God doesn't want us to have a good time. He is not the "spoilsport" some preachers and religious folks make Him out to be. It isn't because He takes delight in punishing us when we get out of line. Good heavens, God did just the opposite and perpetrated the greatest injustice in the history of the world, the punishment poured out on his own Son as a "propitiation for our sins" (1 John 2:2).

God allowed sin for His grandeur and majesty (the Bible calls that His "glory") and for your freedom. For God's sake, don't waste your sin; acknowledge it. Don't kick against the goads. Carefully plan your agendas of protection, or tighten the masks lest anyone see. Besides, God, because He loves you, won't let you do it. Then you will be free.

God hates the way the shame, fear and guilt of our hidden agendas and masks rob us of freedom and joy. He hated it so much that He went through a "mess" of trouble and pain to set us free.

After you have suffered enough, been embarrassed enough, been wrong enough, and sinned enough, He will hug you and invite you to a party He throws for people who are really free, who don't care much what others think, and who have been deeply loved when they didn't deserve it.

You'll be better for it.

I know, I know. I hate it when people say that to me. But in this case, it's true. Maybe not "better" but free—and that really is better.

*Adapted from **Steve Brown's** book, Hidden Agendas: Dropping the Masks that Keep Us Apart (New Growth Press). Steve Brown is the founder of Key Life Network, which exists to communicate that the deepest message of the ministry of Jesus is the radical grace of God. Having spent 25 years as a pastor, Brown*

now devotes much of his time to the radio broadcasts Key Life and Steve Brown, Etc. Keep up with Steve Brown at , on Facebook () and via Twitter (drstevebrown).