

Take Off the Mask

I was recently in an ice-cream parlor with three of my grandchildren. After coming out of the restroom with one of them, I noticed a full-length mirror straight ahead. My granddaughter ran back to her ice cream, but I paused at the mirror.

Hmmm, I thought, *not so bad*. I looked real slender. I turned from one side to another, real proud of myself. I actually ordered fat-free because I wanted to really look good for an upcoming conference. Then I noticed a sign: “You can order another scoop!” This mirror had lied to me. It didn’t tell the truth. I saw an image that was not the real me.

Now, that can be good, and it can be bad. In this case it was good—but only for a moment. The minute I walked away, the truth would be revealed: I better not order another scoop of ice cream!

“Now we see things imperfectly, like puzzling reflections in a mirror, but then we will see everything with perfect clarity. All that I know now is partial and incomplete, but then I will know everything completely, just as **God now knows me completely**” (1 Cor. 13:12, NLT).

God respects **authenticity**. We can fool ourselves, pretending to be something or someone we are not, but God knows me completely. It is impossible to fool God. We may not like ourselves a certain way, but God loves us anyway.

Moses blew it when he came from an encounter with the **presence of God**. God wrote guidelines on stone tablets—these became what we know now as the 10 Commandments. This was a guideline for successful living that God was giving to Moses’ people.

But when Moses saw his friends and colleagues dancing around an idol they made by melting down their gold, Moses became angered and frustrated and broke the tablets God had written on. His face was radiant with the glory of the Lord. Moses put a veil over his face so the people would not see when the

glory left. He wanted them to see him as “spiritual.”

After that encounter, God gave Moses a second chance and called him back to the top of the mountain to visit Him again. He told Moses to cut new tablets of stone and, with unveiled face, to come back into God’s presence.

Here’s the point: God wants **authenticity** when we are in His presence—**no pretense**, no coverups, but total honesty with your feelings, fears, frustrations, fantasies and the like. Too often we come into God’s presence hiding behind our “spiritual veils.”

We have a certain tone that we use when we talk to God. He says, “Hey, just talk normal.” Often we pray louder than we usually talk. God says, “I’m not hard of hearing.” We are hungry, going without food, and God says, “Please eat something so you can be strong.”

Living as if to be **spiritual**—wanting people to know how much we **pray, fast**, give and hear from God—impresses no one but yourself. Your self-righteous and super-spiritual endeavors are not a replacement for the real you.

God gave Moses a second chance. He told Moses to take off his pretense (veil) so God could again show Moses His glory.

At this moment, God reminded Moses that His glory was His character. God restated who He was: “I am merciful, gracious, slow to anger, steadfast in love, faithful and forgiving,” he said (Ex. 34:6). These were all the things that Moses wasn’t when he blew it.

God is giving Moses another opportunity to reflect His character (glory) to his friends, those whom he was leading out of Egypt. Perhaps we can call the people his extended family.

“But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image [God’s virtues] from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of

the Lord” (2 Cor. 13:18, NKJV).

Which attribute of God needs to be added to your glory? Look into the mirror of the real you, and allow Him to reveal His nature to you one attribute at a time. This is how real spirituality is developed. Be real with God, and He will be real to you.

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