

“LIVING FULLY IN THE LIGHT— HEALING AND CALLING FORTH THE TRUE SELF”

As believers in Christ for 20 plus years, we have seen a significant number of leaders in the Body of Christ experience moral failures of various types, resulting in great pain to their families, friends and followers, as well as to themselves. Other leaders, while not involved in a moral failure, experience emotional and spiritual “burn out” and either are asked to step down from ministry or they just quit. While some of these are eventually restored to ministry, others never return. When these things occur, we ask ourselves, “How could this happen? They ministered with such anointing! We never would have believed this!” Although there may be a variety of specific issues or causes, we want to focus here on what we believe to be one very important principle or issue—the false self overpowering the true, God-given self. **AND WHEN THIS IS OVERLOOKED, THE RISK OF SUBSEQUENT FAILURE INCREASES DRAMATICALLY.** It is wishful thinking to believe that once we have accepted Christ, that we have no need to look at our past.

THE FALSE AND THE TRUE SELF



When we are babies, what one sees on the outside (i.e., its “external identity”) is fairly close to what is on the inside (its “internal, God-created identity”). In other words, “What you see is what you get.” However, as that child grows and begins to experience and “cope” with life, a discrepancy develops between the internal and the external. If this developing child does not receive the love, affection, sense of belonging, protection and guidance that God intended or if he/she receives some form of abuse, this discrepancy between the internal or “true self” (the little person in the picture) and the external or “false self” (the larger person in the picture) becomes even greater. As we grow into adulthood, the public self we have developed can become so strong and sophisticated that we may not even realize that who we have become is not truly who God created us to be! In other words, we become “out of touch” with our true identity and we learn to function from this external, false self—sometimes quite effectively. Yet, this false or “public” self is not what God desired, and this fragmentation within creates an inability to truly be intimate with others and with God. Though we may “function” quite well, there is still a cry to be known coming from deep within (from that true, God-created identity). For example, in times of severe stress, fatigue, relationship conflict, loneliness, temptation, etc, we “act out” and do things that surprise others and even ourselves. In our counseling we say that during these times someone else is “driving the car.”

RECAPTURING THE TRUE SELF AND LIVING FULLY IN THE LIGHT

Many people have a pretty good idea that this discrepancy exists internally between the true and false self. But others may not necessarily be aware. One good way that the Father gives us to assess this is by looking at the “fruit” in our lives (Gal. 5:22-23)—particularly in our relationships with others and with Him. Even just looking at the first three fruits of the Spirit (love, joy, and peace) can reveal a great deal. In reality, this false self represents darkness, because it is not formed by God, but rather

is the result of sin—things done to us and our responses to those things. We, in our own ability, cannot recapture this true self. However, we CAN invite the Father (Ps. 139:23-24) to come and begin to dismantle every coping or defense mechanism we have developed to deal with past hurts and we can ask and allow Him to do whatever is necessary to heal and restore and bring forth the true identity—the child within that He created from the very beginning. This process, however, will involve pain, loss and grief, as He reveals to us the impact of our past wounds and our responses to them, and as He leads us into deeper levels of forgiveness. Yet it is the avoidance of this pain that often keeps us from this healing journey and walking more fully into the light. Severe burnout or a moral failure occurs in many people, and not just those in leadership. Yet it is those with higher visibility that cause us to take notice. No one is ever fully “immune” from this occurring, yet the more we know and are connected with our true self and can intimately relate to others and to God from that place, the lower the risk of this happening.

PLEASE PRAY WITH US . . .

Father, I know that You do not just love one part of me, but You embrace all of me. Yet I also know that You desire for me to be whole and to live in the light from a place of the true identity that You placed within me. I also know that I cannot fully love You, myself or others if I am hiding behind anything false within. Lord, I give you permission to reveal to me, directly or through those close to me, if I am living from this false self, and if so, begin the process of healing and restoring my heart. I want all that You have for me and I want to be who You created me to be. I want to fulfill the calling and destiny that You planned for me from the beginning. Please have Your way in me. In Jesus’ Name, Amen.

From the Father's Heart,

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