

# March 2000: Get REAL, Man!

by Aaron Greenway

In the Church in America today, I am struck by the gravitation that we have toward the superficial. In white culture, especially, it has been a hindrance of ours to have surface relationships and not to let anyone get to know the real “us.” Getting too close has a tendency to cause claustrophobia and so we are less likely to let people know what is in our heart of hearts. And anything we say is cloaked over with that controlled image that we put forth.

This has a tendency to seep its way into our walk with God and how we view our relationship with God. To give us a classic example, let’s take a look at the book of 2 Samuel 11-12 in which David is walking up on his roof one night and sees this beautiful woman bathing. He calls for her, she goes into Him and they commit adultery. She becomes pregnant. Then David tells Uriah, her husband, who is in his army, to go home and rest from the war. Uriah will not and so David sends him to the front of the battle to be killed. Mission accomplished. So, Nathan then confronts David with his sin. Upon David’s realization of his sinful act, he repents. We see this in Psalm 51 where David writes the following:

---

**It is time to GET REAL  
and be REAL.  
How can we be  
“the genuine article”  
and not just some version  
of it?**

---

Verse 2: “Blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity. Cleanse me from my sin.”

Verse 4: “Against You, You only, have I sinned...”

Verse 6: “Behold, You desire truth in the inward parts, and in the hidden part You will make me to know wisdom.”

Verse 10: “Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.”

Verse 17: “The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, a broken and a contrite heart — these, O God, You will not despise.”

Out of all this, I see one thing: David's passion to be REAL with God. It wasn't enough for David to be forgiven; David wanted a heart that was totally laid bare before God. He cared about what God thought of his sin; He wanted God's view of his sin.

How much does our sin and our moral failures grieve us? Does our sin make us cry? Do we desire "truth in the inward parts?" Do we earnestly desire to have a heart that is broken and REAL before God, shedding the pretense, shedding the Christianese and the clichés.

Many times, we have a very hard time just being ourselves. How we conduct our relationship with God is mirrored quite extensively in how we conduct our relationships with others. Instead of letting others know that we struggle, we seem to prefer that they think of us as "good, godly Christians" or what we think "a good, godly Christian" is, when our lives are filled with hypocrisy. What did Jesus have to say about doing and saying things just to give people controlled perceptions that may not be true?

"And when you pray, you shall not be like the hypocrites. For they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the corners of the streets, that they may be seen by men" (Matthew 6:5).

If are godliness is a natural expression of a REAL and intimate relationship with God, then all the more... But if they are simply a means to accomplish our ends, then it is time to for a REALity check.

I really believe that God has not called us to a surface relationship with Him; He wants us to know and experience the depths of who He is. He wants us to come clean about who we are, who we think we are, and all of those things that dishonor Him. He also desires for us to be authentic with our brothers and sisters in the Lord and before the world.

Paul prayed desperately for the Ephesians, that they would be "rooted and grounded in love, able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height — to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God" (Ephesians 3:14-19).

Being “surface” with God and others may be a form of self-protection for some, but it will defeat the person engaged in it, leading to a warped view of God, themselves, and others. A person who puts on masks will end up fooling himself/herself (James 1:22-24), because it is very easy to deceive ourselves. Maybe this is why James, all the way through his book, says “Do not be deceived.”

Being REAL means that we will give up our pride. It will probably mean we have to give up certain things. It certainly means that we will have to be more transparent and that we will have to see our sin and our failure for what it is — spitting in God’s face. Let’s not theologially explain it away. Let’s not merely mutter words “God, forgive me.” God’s Son went all the way to the cross for us and was exposed to, in painful humiliation, our failures. In this light, we cannot afford to be fake.

It is time to GET REAL and be REAL. How can we be “the genuine article?” How can we truly be a “good, godly Christian” and not just some version of it? We first, must do as David did, we must ask God to bring forth a contrite heart and a spirit of brokenness within us. Only God can do this in us, if we are willing. Then we need to ask God to show us the areas of our lives that need to be brought to light. When God shows us the areas of our lives that are lived in secret, then we are to come clean with God. Ironically, God told David that David did his deeds in secret, therefore God was going to display David’s “dirty laundry” before the whole nation (2 Sam. 12:12). How humiliating! But, God has a way of putting the spotlight on those who prefer to live in the shadows.

To close, Rebecca St. James has a new video out there entitled “No Secrets,” which I highly recommend. This Grammy-Award winning singer is one of the finest examples I know of someone who is REAL. That goes for her whole family. She does an even better job at explaining these concepts. If any of you have a chance, go buy the video. It is worth it!