

Transparency and Submission

Our culture teaches us to be hypocrites. To the question, "how are you?" to "how's your week been?" we give cliched answers. "I'm fine thanks." "It's been busy." "You know, same old routine." We play the game. How things really are we keep hidden. Often so hidden that we ourselves really do not honestly confront how we are doing. My friends at 'TrueFaced' ministry sent the following to me:

William Wilberforce

No one really knows how much William Wilberforce struggled to open up his life to a few friends and trust their counsel for him, instead of trusting his own. Wilberforce had concluded that he should become a minister. But, his trusted friends, including John Newton (the author of the hymn "Amazing Grace") and William Pitt (later, Prime Minister of Great Britain) asked William to instead trust them with how they saw him and how he affected others. They counseled him that his time in history, his cluster of gifts and his network of relationships were to be used in the political arena for kingdom reform. The massive results of Wilberforce trusting his friends, instead of himself, are unfathomable.

Vulnerability is not Transparency

Millions of people long for their life to count. Transparency simply means disclosing myself to others. Transparency allows others to know you, your hopes and disappointments, and to see the cracks in your life. But vulnerability goes beyond transparency to letting others fill those cracks, whether they include blind spots about who you are, how you affect others or what your purpose is on earth.

This is what the Bible means when it speaks of submission. Submission is "letting" another person influence you. Wilberforce experienced this submission, this vulnerability. He could've said to his friends, "I'm deciding to become a minister [of the Gospel] and leave politics. Please pray for me." That's transparency. But, because he was vulnerable - "trusting others with me" - Wilberforce is remembered today as the great reformer whose work led to the abolition of slavery in the British Empire. [TrueFaced Ministry]

Jesus' biggest criticism was directed to individuals who were masters of hypocrisy. They were so masterful that they were blinded to their own real condition. The stinging rebuke of Jesus in Matthew 23:13-36 makes sober reading. Here is an extract of what Jesus said to them: "Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You give a tenth of your spices, mint, dill and cummin. But you have neglected the more important matters of the law, justice, mercy and faithfulness. You should have practiced the latter, without neglecting the former. Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You clean the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence. Blind Pharisee! First clean the inside of the cup and dish, and then the outside also will be clean." Let's avoid falling into the same syndrome.