

THE NECESSITY OF AUTHENTICITY

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Theme: "God Cannot Bless the Person You're Pretending to Be"

Psalms 139:23–24 (KJV)

Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.

Authenticity is the decision to live without the exhausting distance between **who we are, who we pretend to be, and who God is calling us to become.** Biblical authenticity does not mean, "This is just who I am, so accept it." It means, **"This is honestly where I am, and I am willing to let God transform me."**

Here are four movements of authenticity: **Revelation, Rejection, Realignment, and Release.**

1. Authenticity Requires REVELATION

You cannot change what you refuse to confront.

Psalms 139:23–24 (KJV)

Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.

David does something spiritually mature: he gives God permission to show him **himself.**

Most of us are experts at examining everybody except ourselves. We recognize their attitude, their insecurity, their jealousy, their dysfunction and their inconsistency—but authenticity turns the mirror inward.

David essentially says, **“God, show me what I cannot see about me.”**

Authenticity begins with self-awareness. There are things about us that other people may recognize before we do. Our defenses can keep us from confronting painful truths about ourselves.

James uses the imagery of a mirror:

James 1:23–25 (KJV)

For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.

The Word does not merely reveal **God to us**; it reveals **us to us**.

Teaching principle: You cannot heal what you hide, correct what you deny, or surrender what you refuse to identify.

Life application: Ask yourself: *What truth about myself have I been avoiding because acknowledging it would require me to change?*

2. Authenticity Requires REJECTION

You must reject the pressure to perform for people.

Galatians 1:10 (KJV)

For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ.

One of the greatest enemies of authenticity is **approval addiction**.

When you desperately need everybody's approval, eventually you will become whatever the room requires.

Around one group, you become one person.
Around another group, you become somebody else.

And eventually you can become so skilled at performing that **you lose contact with your authentic identity**.

Saul provides a powerful example. After disobeying God, he confessed:

1 Samuel 15:24 (KJV)

And Saul said unto Samuel, I have sinned: for I have transgressed the commandment of the LORD, and thy words: because I feared the people, and obeyed their voice.

Notice the progression:

Fear of people → need for approval → compromised obedience → loss of authenticity.

Saul allowed public opinion to become louder than divine instruction.

Authenticity sometimes requires being willing to **disappoint people rather than betray your convictions**.

Jesus warned against spirituality that becomes performance:

Matthew 6:1 (KJV)

Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them...

There is a profound difference between **being seen** and **living to be seen**.

Teaching principle: If you constantly need applause to confirm your identity, eventually you will compromise your identity to maintain the applause.

Life application: Ask yourself: *Who am I trying so hard to impress that I have started compromising who God called me to be?*

3. Authenticity Requires REALIGNMENT

Your private life and public life must begin moving toward agreement.

Proverbs 11:3 (KJV)

The integrity of the upright shall guide them: but the perverseness of transgressors shall destroy them.

The Hebrew concept behind **integrity** carries the idea of completeness, innocence, or wholeness.

Authenticity is ultimately about **wholeness**.

It is when:

**Your confession matches your conduct,
Your beliefs influence your behavior,
Your private character supports your public reputation, and the person people see increasingly resembles the person God sees.**

This does not mean perfection.

Authenticity is **not perfection; it is consistency and honesty in the process of transformation.**

Jesus confronted the Pharisees because their greatest problem was not simply their sin—it was the distance between **appearance and reality**.

Matthew 23:27–28 (KJV)

Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness. Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity.

The Greek word associated with **hypocrite** (*hypokritēs*) was used for an actor—someone playing a role.

Jesus is essentially confronting **spiritual acting**.

You can perfect the image while neglecting the interior.

You can look healed and still hurt.

You can look confident and still be insecure.

You can look spiritual and still be spiritually empty.

Teaching principle: God is more interested in developing your character than protecting your image.

Life application: Ask yourself: *Where is there presently a gap between the person I present and the person I actually am?*

4. Authenticity Produces RELEASE

There is freedom when you no longer have an image to maintain.

John 8:31–32 (KJV)

If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

Truth and freedom are connected.

Wherever deception has to be maintained, bondage eventually develops because pretending is exhausting.

You have to remember what you said.

You have to maintain the image.

You have to manage people's perceptions.

You have to hide your weaknesses.

You have to pretend everything is fine.

But authenticity says:

"I don't have to pretend to have arrived. I can admit that God is still working on me."

Paul modeled this kind of transparency:

Philippians 3:12–14 (KJV)

Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after... Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

Paul essentially says, **"I haven't arrived."**

That admission did not weaken his credibility. It demonstrated his maturity.

Authenticity gives you permission to say:

"I'm growing."

"I'm learning."

"I was wrong."

"I need help."

"I need to change."

"God is still working on me."

That is not weakness. **That is freedom.**

Teaching principle: There is tremendous freedom in no longer needing to convince people that you are something God already knows you are not.

The Four Truths

REVELATION — *Let God show you the real you.*

Psalms 139:23–24

REJECTION — *Reject the pressure to perform for people.*

Galatians 1:10

REALIGNMENT — *Bring your private character and public confession into agreement.*

Proverbs 11:3

RELEASE — *Experience the freedom of living in truth.*

John 8:31–32

Closing Thought

Perhaps the greatest tragedy is not that other people never discover who you really are. **The greater tragedy is spending so much time becoming who everybody else expects you to be that you never discover who God created you to become.**

God did not call your **image**.

God did not anoint your **performance**.

God did not choose your **persona**.

He chose you.

And transformation begins when we can finally stand before God without the mask and pray:

“Lord, here I am—not who people think I am, not who I pretend to be, and not merely who I want to be. Here is who I really am. Now make me who You created me to become.”

Power statement:

You don’t have to fake perfection when you’re committed to authentic transformation.