

Emotional Masks

The “Happy” Mask

The **Happy Mask** is often worn by the People-Pleaser. This person is always smiling, agreeable, and eager to make others happy, even when they’re struggling internally. Whether it’s a friend who never says no or a coworker who takes on too much, they appear cheerful and content, but beneath the surface, they may feel overwhelmed or drained.

What’s underneath?

People-Pleasers often fear rejection or conflict. They worry that saying no or setting boundaries will cause others to dislike them or see them as selfish.

The “Tough” Mask

The **Tough Mask** is worn by those who believe showing emotion equals weakness. These individuals appear calm, composed, and always in control, even during difficult situations. It can be easy to assume they’re unbothered, but this mask conceals a deep struggle to avoid vulnerability.

What’s underneath?

The Tough Mask is often hiding fear—fear of judgment, fear of appearing weak, or even fear of confronting one’s own emotions.

The “Funny” Mask

Humor can be a wonderful tool for connection, because laughter really is good for our souls - but when it’s used to deflect from deeper feelings, it becomes a **Funny Mask**. The Class Clown wears this mask, using jokes and laughter to distract others (and themselves) from what’s really going on inside.

What's underneath?

Beneath the Funny Mask, there's often insecurity, sadness, or even loneliness. The constant joking keeps people at arm's length, preventing meaningful emotional connections.

The "Put-Together" Mask

The **Put-Together Mask** is all about perfection. This person seems to have it all together—whether it's the flawless parent, the high-achieving student, or the star employee. But behind this mask lies a fear of failure and a struggle with feeling inadequate.

What's underneath?

At the heart of this mask is often low self-esteem or fear of not measuring up. Perfectionists worry that if they're not perfect, they won't be accepted or valued.

The Caretaker Mask

The **Caretaker Mask** is worn by those who put everyone else's needs before their own. These individuals are quick to help others, but rarely open up about their own struggles. While they seem selfless, they're often avoiding dealing with their own emotions by focusing on others. This looks like "I'm fine, but let me help you."

What's underneath?

Caretakers may hide behind this mask because they believe their worth comes from taking care of others. They might also worry about burdening others with their problems.

The Ghost Mask

The **Ghost Mask** is worn by those who try to make themselves invisible. They avoid attention, shy away from conflict, and often feel overlooked. This mask is usually worn by individuals struggling with low self-esteem or social anxiety.

What's underneath?

Beneath the Ghost Mask is often a fear of being judged or misunderstood. By making themselves small, these individuals avoid the discomfort of social interactions and protect themselves from criticism.

The Conformist Mask

The **Conformist Mask** involves fitting in at all costs. This person molds their views, style, or even core values to match a group. It feels comfortable to be part of the “in-crowd” because you avoid criticism or exclusion. But losing one’s own identity might leave you feeling hollow and unsure of your true self.

What's underneath?

Conformity can satisfy a primal desire for belonging. Societal pressures, social media culture, and fear of standing out can reinforce this mask.

The Overachieving Mask

Ambition drives this person to set lofty goals, hustle hard, and surpass everyone else. They are typically the top performer, the valedictorian, or the one churning out stellar results at work. But inside, they may grapple with relentless anxiety about falling short or not measuring up. The overachieving mask can disguise feelings of self-doubt and fear of failure. This person clings to tangible accomplishments to prove their worth.

What's underneath?

Overachievement often stems from perfectionism, which can arise from childhood expectations or social comparisons. This person learns that success leads to approval, so the emotional mask becomes their life's purpose.

Seven Practical Ways We Can Live Out What We Are Learning

1 - Be Authentic

Embracing authenticity is key to living a fulfilling life aligned with our faith. We realize that God calls us to be honest about our struggles, doubts, and triumphs. Hiding behind a mask prevents us from forming deep connections and experiencing the community God intends for us. When we choose authenticity, we can better reflect His love and grace to others. Remember, this is not an excuse to act however you want – this is about allowing ourselves to be open enough with others that we let them see our true selves without the mask!

Matthew 5:8 Jesus tells us that *“Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God!”*
What a gift authenticity brings!

2- Live in Truth

Living in truth means being transparent about our lives and faith. Often, we might feel pressured to conform to the expectations of society or even our fellow Christians. However, the Bible encourages us not to be ashamed of our true emotions and experiences. Not to be run by our emotions, but also not denying them. When we shed our masks, we open ourselves to the possibility of healing, support, and genuine relationships with others. We can share our journeys, helping one another along the way as we grow together in Christ.

Eph. 4:25 *“Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to your neighbor, for we are all members of one body.”*

3 - Embracing Vulnerability

It can be daunting to explore vulnerability, especially if we have been hurt and when we’ve been accustomed to wearing masks for protection. Yet, God calls us to embrace our vulnerabilities as they invite His grace into our lives. We can take comfort in knowing that we can show who we really are to God without fear of judgment. He knows it already, so it’s silly to try to hide it from Him. Hiding who we are often stifles our spiritual growth, but when we let our guard down, it allows God to work in our lives and heal us from within.

2 Cor. 12:9 ⁹ *But he (The Lord) said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ’s power may rest on me. ¹⁰ That is why, for Christ’s sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong.”*

4 - Finding Freedom

There is great freedom that comes when we choose to stop hiding behind masks. This freedom comes from knowing that we no longer have to pretend or live in fear of being discovered. God’s love and forgiveness grant us the tools to rise above our past mistakes and insecurities. Embracing freedom can transform our relationships with others and deepen our connection with God. We find beauty in imperfection and strength in authenticity.

John 10:10 ¹⁰ *The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.*

Galatians 5:1 *It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery.*

5 - Community Acceptance

When we as a community create a space of acceptance, love, and understanding, we allow others to feel safe in just being themselves. Letting go of our own masks encourages a warm, genuine, and inviting environment where everyone can feel they belong. The Bible teaches us that we are called to bear one another’s burdens and rejoice in our victories together. As we support and uplift one another, we can foster a genuine spirit of unity in Christ.

Col 3:12-14 ¹² *Therefore, as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. ¹³ Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. ¹⁴ And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.*

6 - Understanding God's Love

Even when we wear masks, God's love remains steadfast. Again, we are not fooling Him, and He still chooses to love us despite ourselves. He can do no differently. Understanding this love enables us to take off our masks and feel safe. It is a reminder that we don't have to prove ourselves; instead, we can simply exist as His beloved children. The more we grasp the depth of God's love, the more confident we become in removing the facades we've created. God's love heals, transforms, and gives us the courage to be who He created us to be.

Eph 3:17b-19; And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, ¹⁸ may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, ¹⁹ and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

7- Journey with God

The Bible invites us to take a journey with God. A journey that will teach us who He is and who we are to Him as He crafted and designed each one of us individually with intention and purpose. Removing our masks is a crucial step in our journey that allows us to uncover who God created us to be. It helps us to discover who we are in Christ and allows us to step boldly into the plans He has for us. Ultimately, it leads us to a richer understanding of our faith and who we are meant to be.

Psalm 139:14 "I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well."

Philippians 1:6 "Being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus."