

Hiding From Love

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We've all heard the statement that God is Love. If that's true, then why don't we throw ourselves at Him like an adoring fan tries to get close to a favorite celebrity? In spite of all the glories ascribed to love, if we look deep inside, we're afraid of it. And God's love is the most frightening of all. So, whether we realize it or not, we hide from love.

Being Seen

Love sees us for who we really are. It sees past our defenses and disguises. It peers into our very souls. It sees what we want no one to see, including God. Most of us dislike the intensity of close examination. We prefer to control our secrets. We keep love at a safe distance to prevent it from peering too deeply into our souls. We chose to hide from love's scrutiny. If we are truly seen, then we will be rejected, we tell ourselves. Sometimes, we hide because we are ashamed, like Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. I'm encouraged that, in spite of their hiding, God sought them out. That shows God's desire for relationship. When God asked them why they were hiding, they said because they were naked. They weren't ashamed because they were nude. They were ashamed because they now had something to hide, their sin against God. When one has nothing to hide, then exposure is no threat. Because we have something to hide, we don't want to be exposed, even before God.

God's love sees you as you truly are. God unconditionally loves what He sees.

A Mirror

Love acts as a mirror. It shows us ourselves through the eyes of another who reflects to us what they see. We don't like to see ourselves in this manner because it requires another to relay what they see. They might see something repulsive. Can we trust others to tell us the truth? Do we *want* others to tell us the truth? It's difficult to trust people to be an impartial mirror. People withhold or exaggerate. Yet, we need mirrors in life. We need someone to tell us the truth about us. On our own, we can't see ourselves accurately because the proverbial plank in our eye (blind spot) gets in the way. We can't see the sign taped on our back that announces our foolishness. That's why we need a mirror.

God's love speaks the truth if you are willing to listen. It reflects to you your true nature.

Being Safe

When love draws near, we don't feel safe, sometimes. It's like a hound dog sniffing at the door of our pantry. We cringe because we don't want it to discover our stash of candy bars. If love only knew what we did in secret, it would withdraw, we tell ourselves. We want to control what love sees and has access to. We welcome love, but on our own terms. So we keep love at arm's length, lest it be too threatening. One reason love is scary is because it requires us to be vulnerable. When we are vulnerable, then we can be hurt the most. When our heart is exposed, rejection and reproach can wound us deeply. Knowing that, we try to protect our hearts as best we can.

God's love can give you a sense of safety if you learn to trust it. It holds you when you are most vulnerable.

Hidden Monsters

Love shines a light into our souls. It exposes what's hidden in the dark, things even we don't want to see or admit to. Our monsters are those things we're ashamed of, those things no one is ever meant to see or know about. We believe that these monsters are so ugly, they would repel even the most tolerant. If they threaten us, then they will certainly threaten others. We don't venture into the dark of our own souls because we know the monsters are hiding there. We think that love isn't strong enough to handle our monsters, that love is too pure to embrace such ugliness.

God's love is strong enough to enter the dark of your soul and seek your monsters. Although perfectly pure, it's capable to love the ugliness you cannot bring yourself to love. But you must give God permission to enter your soul.

Intimacy

Intimacy is being known. I have heard it defined as "into me you see." Being known is one step further than being seen. It means we are understood. The knower "gets us." We find comfort in knowing that someone understands us, even if we don't understand ourselves.

God's love understands you. God knows your thoughts and motivations. He can make sense out of your jumbled feelings and desires.

No Sense In Hiding

We cannot hide from God although we fool ourselves in thinking we can. God already sees everything and knows everything. He knows all about our monsters. He knows about the defects we aren't aware of. When the mirror of His love exposes new monsters, our normal response is shame and embarrassment. But the monsters have been there all along, undetected by us. God has known about them for years. Others may have known of them, but didn't tell us. So when God exposes them, be grateful because God thinks you are ready to see them. It also means He is ready to deal with them, so don't beat yourself up but let God have access to them so He can heal you.

The Great Seer and Knower

When God sees you, he sees past your stuff. He sees past your history, past your deficiencies. He sees your soul, the unique person you are, the person behind the mask, the child within the adult. He sees the pure essence of your being, beneath the layers of debris you pack on yourself. That is what God really sees and wants to see. He sees past your hurts and fears, and sees you as a beautiful, fragile soul. It is your soul He loves. Everything will be stripped away one day, and that which will be left is what God sets His sights on, what He desires to embrace, what He chooses to love.

God knows you. He knows your thoughts, your desires, your obsessions, your destructive behaviors. And yet, He loves you. Unconditional love is not based on merit or worth. It is based on its own ability to love for its own sake. It is based on choice. And God has chosen to love you because His core nature is love. God is love manifest. He loves because He cannot help but love.

Freedom

All these observations support the claim that love is freedom. Freedom to be seen. Freedom to be known. Freedom from fear and hiding. Love makes you free, free to be yourself. Be open to love and let love free you. Let God love you and show you who you really are. If you dare, look into His eyes and see what

He sees, the person He embraces with unbounded love. "There is no fear in love, but perfect love drives out fear" – I John 4:18.

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