



Finding Christ in Being Authentic

When someone looks you in the eye, do they see the real you? Do the people who know you say this about you, "What you see is what you get?"

Being authentic is something to strive for each day. It is living honestly, showing the world the person that is the real you. People don't have to wonder if what you're saying is really what you mean.

Being reliable and being real are two qualities Jesus is known for—what you see is what you get! Jesus' followers know exactly who he is and what he stands for; he shows us the way to be real. And here's the thing—when you are authentically you, that's when Jesus Christ is most at home in your heart (see Ephesians 3.17).

Articles on Being Yourself

- ★ "Jesus' Temptations, My Temptations" (Matthew 4.1–11)
- ★ "Not of This World" (John 15.18–25)
- ★ "When the Waves Get Too Rough" (Acts 27.21–25)
- ★ "It's What's Inside That Counts" (2 Corinthians 5.1–5)

Jesus is most at home in your heart
when you are authentic.

Study 1: See Yourself as God Sees You

Read: Luke 4.1–13

✦ What temptations keep you from being authentic?

Meditate

It can be so easy to try to please people, and it can be tempting to try to change who you are to fit other people's needs and expectations. We usually don't do this on purpose, but perhaps we aren't confident or we don't think there is anything special or unique about us.

Discovering who God made you to be, your authentic self, is a challenge that requires courage.

Here is a key to being authentic—try this if you want to grow. Each day, when you are most alert, see yourself the way God sees you: with your beauty, your potential, your strengths, your areas of growth, and all the possibilities of what you will accomplish in this life. If you could see yourself in the way God sees you, you would live your life with more confidence, more hope, and less fear.

This same God, who sees you to your core, knows when you are being real. It is impossible to fake it with God. Instead, follow the example of Jesus in this reading from Luke. Satan taunted Jesus by saying, "If you are . . .," but Jesus stood strong in whom he knew himself to be.

Jesus wore his heart on his sleeve. It did not take long to figure out what was on his mind and in his heart. And you? Will others have to wade through your false layers to find out who you are? Or, from their first encounter with you, will they know they have met one of God's best?

Reflect

✦ What or who keeps you from being yourself? Who supports you as you try to be authentic?

✦ If you really work on being genuine, what could you accomplish?

Pray: Psalm 103 (Who you are is a blessing to the Lord)

*"Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations."
(Jeremiah 1.5)*

Study 2: The Fear Factor

Read: Matthew 8.23–27

- ✦ What word or phrase strikes you the most in this Bible story? What did you learn about Jesus?

Meditate

“I can’t do that!” “What if I fail?” “I don’t want to look stupid!”

Have you ever said any of these things? Do your fears prevent you from experiencing a full life?

It has been said that most individuals on their deathbeds don’t regret the things they did; they regret the things they didn’t do. You won’t stop growing if you have fears, but you will stop growing if your fears govern your life.

So, how can you face those fears that shackle your life right now? With the courage God gives, you can identify the fears. Reflect on the great things that will happen in your life if you make even a small attempt to confront and work through these fears. Keep your attention on the great things that are on the other side of your fear.

Look at the disciples’ reaction during the storm. Could Jesus’ sleeping presence on the storm-tossed sea also be a sign of the sleeping faith of his disciples? They feared for their lives even though Jesus was so close to them that they could hold his hand. They were asleep to Christ, not recognizing that he was present to them.

Our persistent, loving Lord is always present. What fears blind you from Jesus’ presence in your life? In your time of fears and doubts, can you imagine Jesus’ asking you the same question he asked the disciples: “Why are you afraid?” (Matthew 8.26). Then turn to the Lord, who is present with you, and hear him say, “It is I, do not be afraid.”

Reflect

- ✦ What might God be asking of you that you are afraid of doing? How can you challenge yourself to face your fears?
- ✦ How is Jesus present to you in the storms of your life?

Pray: Psalm 36 (God’s steadfast love will protect us)

“For I, the LORD your God, hold your right hand; it is I who say to you, ‘Do not fear, I will help you.’” (Isaiah 41.13)

Study 3: Loving Properly

Read: John 10.9–10

✦ What word or phrase strikes you the most in this Bible passage?

Meditate

Deep inside each of us is a hunger for authentic human relationships. But finding healthy relationships, in which one freely gives and receives love, does not just happen—it is a quest. So, let's do a checklist: Do you live in relationship with Jesus? Do you know and believe how important you are to God? Do you live each day realizing the unique creation you are? If so, you will enter into authentic relationships.

But, if for some reason you don't believe in your true worth, your search for relationships may result in behaviors that separate you from yourself, others, and God. Let's say it plainly—sometimes in our quest for meaningful relationships, we substitute sex for love. But giving your body before marriage does not help you form authentic relationships; rather, it almost always leads to relationships in which you give a lot but receive little in return.

The abundant life that Jesus talks about in this passage includes meaningful, authentic relationships—that is, relationships that are characterized by trust and unconditional love. If we truly believe that God dwells in our bodies and that our bodies are of great value to God, then we will make the right decisions when it comes to forming relationships. Pray to Jesus for wisdom and guidance as you journey through this time of your life, a life that is not only challenging but also filled with God's promise.

Reflect

- ✦ How do you search for authentic relationships?
- ✦ How is life abundant for you? How are you tempted to settle for something less than the wonderful life God wants for you?

Pray: Psalm 139 (You created my inmost self)

*"For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the LORD, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope."
(Jeremiah 29.11)*

Show the world the real you!