25/2



Behind the Mask



Throughout the last eight years serving as your women's ministries general director, our devotional themes have focused on living a victorious life, empowered by the Holy Spirit. They were intended, for the most part, to be uplifting and encouraging. However, in our quest to live that overcoming victorious life, we must take a hard look at ourselves and remove anything in our lives that isn't pleasing to our Creator. We must ask ourselves: "Is the person I portray to the world who I really am? Do I focus my efforts on being what others expect

me to be *or* who God made me to be? Am I living in fear, hoping no one realizes that I'm not who they think I am? Am I masking my true identity?"

A mask never brings us closer to who we were created to be. Masks only make shallow what God has intended to be deep. Our friendships. Our marriages. Our families. Our churches. Everything in our lives is cheated when we choose to be fake.

I love the way the Message Bible translates Luke 12:1-3: "Pharisee yeast, Pharisee phoniness. You can't keep your true self hidden forever; before long you'll be exposed. You can't hide behind a religious mask forever; sooner or later the mask will slip and your true face will be known. You can't whisper one thing in private and preach the opposite in public; the day's coming when those whispers will be repeated all over town."

These words are harsh I know. None of us wants to be called a phony! However, if we aren't being who God has called us to be, if we are wearing a religious mask, then aren't we being phony?

According to Strong's Concordance, Christ candidly confronted these deceptive phonies and called them "hypocrites." In the book of Matthew, Christ used the Greek word for hypocrite (hupokrites) 14 times. This word originated in the Greek theater and meant "mask-wearer."

Strong's also records that in New Testament times an actor or actress on stage might play several roles. In one role the person would come on stage wearing one costume and a mask representing a certain character. These masks were on short sticks and held in front of the face. Then that person would go off stage, switch costumes, put on elevator shoes, pick up a different mask, change voice inflection, and come back on stage as another personality. That's okay on stage. It is acceptable and expected in the theater. However, when wearing masks becomes a lifestyle, it is confusing not only to the mask-wearers but also to the people around them.

As Christian women, it takes courage to live without masks! Just ask yourselves: "What would happen if I stopped apologizing for being honest with others and started expecting and accepting authenticity?" If mask-wearing were a thing of the past in my life: "How would my friendships be different? How would my marriage be different? How would my relationship with God be different? How much happier would my life be? How much more effective would my ministry be?"

Hebrews 4:13 says, "No creature is hidden from Him, but all things are naked and exposed to the eyes of Him to whom we must give an account." Let's be honest! Our Creator already knows everything about us, yet He loves us and He has called us for such a time as this anyway! Let's remove those masks and begin reflecting instead the love, grace, and mercy of Christ! This world needs to know the real you and the Christ who loves, forgives, and strengthens you in spite of you!

Empowered to Serve,

Janice Scott

General Director of Women's Ministries

2016

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January National WM Registration Month Women's Connection January 1-31

New Year's Day January 1

Women's Ministries Day January 3

MLK Jr. Day January 18

February Valentine's Day February 14

March

Good Friday March 25

Easter March 27

May

Alabaster Box
Outpouring:
This is an opportunity
to bless all the
ministries of the WM
Dept. Please make this
a special time of giving.
May 1-31

National Day of Prayer May 5

Mother's Day May 8

Memorial Day May 30

June Father's Day June 19

Summerfest Phoenix June 21-24

July Independence Day July 4

September Labor Day September 5

October

Light Another Candle: Your gift goes to serve the vision of Messenger College and the various ministry and mission endeavors of the Women's Ministries Department. October 1-31

Pastor Appreciation Month

Breast Cancer Awareness Month

November

Veteran's Day November 11

Thanksgiving Day November 24

December

Impact Appalachia: Women's Ministries is partnering with the National Missions and Youth Ministries Departments for this outreach. December 1-3

Christmas Day December 25



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Be sure to register with Empowered Women's Ministries in January 2016 to get connected to these great ministries:



Get Connected to these Ministries!



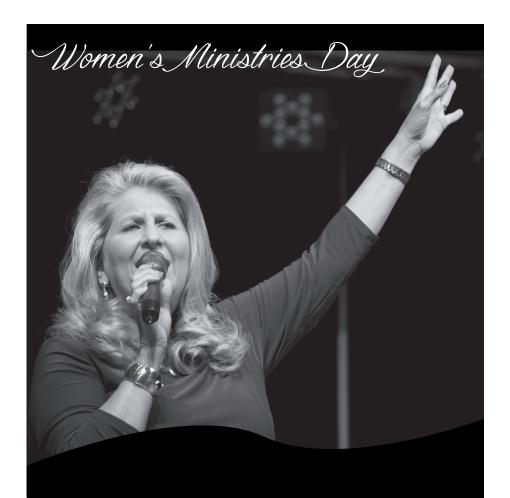












Women's Ministries Day • January 3, 2016

The month of January has been established as a time to recognize Women's Ministries among the women of the Pentecostal Church of God. It gives opportunity for ladies around the world to join hands in united ministry and accomplish together what could not be possible alone. Each local church is encouraged to observe a special day emphasizing the ministry of women. We ask that a special offering be taken on this day to support Women's Ministries on the local, district, and national levels.



Deceived by the Mask

by Cwen Jennings

Self-deception...I'm not who I pretend to be. Nobody knows the real me.





Gwen Jennings has been married to the love of her life, Jon Jennings, for 23 years and they have five children. For the past 18 years they have served in the Arizona District as the district secretaries. Currently they pastor at The Fountain in Phoenix, where

they have served for 13 years. Gwen's passion is to help empower women to live a spiritually healthy life without the baggage of the past. She truly loves working side by side with her husband in any role Christ calls them to.



Deceived by the Mask • Gwen Jennings

Introduction: The Mask

I think we all like super heroes. We like what they stand for: righting the world's problems, standing for good in the face of bad, being a voice to those who have none, and making a true difference in the world. We even like what super heroes wear, and they all have something in common. All super heroes wear a mask or something to disguise their true identity. They all pretend to be something they are not, yet we overlook that fact because we only see the good in what they accomplish. For the super hero, there is great power in a mask.

A mask is defined as something designed to hide, conceal, cover up, obscure, screen, cloak, camouflage, and to veil. When I look at this definition of a mask, I see the enemy's true intent for humanity. I believe God has the true blueprint of our life. Our DNA was crafted by Him and His breath gave us life which Psalm 139 so beautifully bears out. The problem is the enemy wants to destroy that by getting us to choose a mask over God's original design.

We listen to the lies of insecurity, doubt and fear, and in doing so we believe the mask is our defense. Self-deception becomes the reality in which we choose to live, making the mask so powerful!

What is Sett-Decention?

Self-deception is the act of deceiving. It is also the state of being deceived. It's a fraud or an artifice. Self-deception is the place the enemy of our souls longs to get us to, for it is there that our true identity is altered and we buy into the lie that we need the mask. John 10:10 says, "The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy." It's through self-deception that he destroys God's blueprint and we begin to live a counterfeit life. We believe the lies and embrace them as truth. We allow the enemy to sculpt a beautifully crafted mask that we accept as our own. We wear the masks not realizing that our very souls are in danger. Self-deception says, "Wear the mask; it's your protection, your cover up, your true self. No one will like the real you. Put the mask on and you can be anyone you want." The

danger, however, is the longer the mask is worn, the more we fall under the great cloak of selfdeception.

The Effects of the Mask

The greatest harm the mask brings is to us. We hide our very selves from a world that desperately needs to see the real us. We also become isolated, fearful, resentful, insecure, and judgmental. We think the mask helps us, but we are never truly at peace with ourselves or with God. We never really feel good about ourselves, and we find those closest to us can never make us feel good or bring us true peace. The end result is we are always empty and, therefore, searching for something that can bring peace and happiness. Earlier we discovered in John 10:10 that the enemy comes to kill and destroy, but there's even more to the verse. Jesus says He came that "we may have life, and have it to the fullest!" That's good news! I don't have to continue wearing the mask and having all those nasty side effects. Christ has given me life. I'm created in His image and He has my blueprint.

My Story

I would like to take a few moments and share my story with you. I was raised in a loving, Christian home and we had a great family. It was, however, a very legalistic environment. I wasn't taught the grace of God or even the love of God, but rather that it's through my outward appearance that I would gain God's approval. It

was in *my* perfection that I could be closer to Him. Thus, early on my view of God was skewed and distorted. I learned to appreciate the mask and to always have it on so I could show God—and everyone else—that I was good.

Through my early life and into adulthood, the mask was my friend, or so I thought. By age 25, I had a closet full of masks; masks of every color, shape, and one for every situation. You have heard of women who can't leave home without their makeup on? I couldn't leave home without my mask on! I couldn't be around my husband, children, or close friends without the mask on. I had used a mask for so long that it became my identity, but this identity was not the identity God had created for me. It was the one Satan had me believe.

I can relate to the harmful side effects of the mask because I lived with them every day. I walked into depression when I was 12, had suicidal thoughts by 13, and dealt with an eating disorder through high school into my early 20s. I was insecure, fearful, angry, and jealous of what others had. I wasn't happy and, subsequently, held my husband, children, and friends at arm's length. I lived daily with selfdeception! But because of Christ, I didn't stay that way. In the darkest part of my life, hope shone through my mask!

I was 23 and married with two small children when my mother passed away suddenly. In a matter of a few seconds my world fell apart and the ability to keep the mask on was impossible. Over the next several years, God led me beside the still waters and truly restored my soul. He delivered me from depression during a church service where I was out in the Spirit for several hours. Afterward, I was so radically changed that I had to start discovering who God created me to be. The mask no longer fit because I no longer needed it. Psalm 139 became my song, and I read it over and over until my closet of masks was cleaned out and replaced with so much more.

Conclusion

So that's my story. What is yours? Are you wearing masks? The truth is, God never intended His children to cover up with masks or live with self-deception. He came to give us life, and life to the fullest. We are his creation, formed after Him, and our DNA is His! We are His children, and His kids don't need masks!

Quotes

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

—John 10:10

"The greatest act of courage is to be and own all that you are without apology, without excuses, without masks to cover the truth of who you are."—Debbie Ford "Love takes off the masks that we fear we cannot live without and know we cannot live within." —James A. Baldwin

5 Steps to Free Yourself from Self-Deception

- **1.** Recognize you have a mask.
- **2.** Become uncomfortable living behind the mask, realizing there is more joy in life without the mask.
- **3.** Ask Christ to help you identify who He has made you to be.
- **4.** Stand firm in who Christ has made you be.
- **5.** Destroy the mask! You don't need it anymore. Don't keep a mask around for when you think you might need it.

Motes:	"There are far,
	far better things
	ahead than
	any we leave
	behind."
	−C.S. Lewis
	"For last year's
	words belong
	to last year's
	language and
	next year's
	words await
	another voice."
	-T.S.Eliot
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The Masquerade of Love Obscured

by Carol Callahan

No one knows the real me; they only love who they think I am. They wouldn't love me if they really knew me. God knows you and loves you anyway.





Carol Callahan is a minister's wife, mother of five, grandmother of 14, speaker, writer, and ordained minister. She is known for her compassionate heart and contagious smile. Her life passion is to share hope with hurting, lost, and lonely people. She also loves good coffee, dark chocolate, anything raspberry, and curling up with a good book on a rainy day.



The Masquerade of Love Obscured • Carol Callahan

Introduction

As a child my daughter was shy and always avoided attention. When our church did children's musicals, she never took a part—especially not a leading role. But one year there was a play in which all the leads wore full costumes. No one could tell who was behind the mask. She not only played a lead, but she performed with great creativity and enthusiasm. The masquerade freed her from the concern about whether people liked, approved, or accepted her.

Our Problem

Unfortunately, the longing for acceptance and approval isn't something we outgrow. Many ladies, much like my daughter, hide behind a mask—whether physical or emotional. It's as if they believe, "If people saw the 'real me,' they could never love me." There, hiding behind their masks, they fail to realize every person they encounter has the same need for acceptance, for approval, for being loved.

As Christian women we are given absolute assurance of our personal value. In moments of self-doubt we can proclaim the description God's Word gives of us: "I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well" (Psalm 139:14). To deny our value, the wonderful way in which we have been created, is to deny God's perfection. We may not fulfill the expectations of this world, but God loves us just the way He made us, and simply because He made us.

God's Solution

God's love removes the need for masks. He sees and loves us as we are. In fact, better than that, He sees us as He destined us to be. We cannot improve on the script He wrote for our life. "All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be" (Psalm 139:16). As a writer I know the sense of value and ownership I take of the things I write. My words become my creation. How much more does God value the script of our lives written by Him from the beginning? We are His living masterpieces! There is no reason to hide behind masks.

Have you ever noticed that when celebrities attend a big event, one of

the most noted and reported facts is who designed their "look." There are stars who are known for their flawless style and for their preference for a particular designer. People come to expect a certain quality and image from the celebrity because they are associated with that designer. Similarly, pieces of artwork are known by the name of their creator. Although no artist is 100-percent consistent and successful, if a piece of artwork is revealed for the first time, people have an expectation that what they see will compare with what the artist has created previously.

Cur Designer
The Artist who created us has

an unquestionable success rate. His touch can be detected in every piece of His creation. And you and I are some of His finest masterpieces. There is no need to hide behind a mask of fitting in or following the crowd. We don't draw our value from our own efforts or abilities. We operate on a different level. We take our cues, in fact our identity, from our Creator. His evaluation of us doesn't depend on what is seen, but on what He knows. "For the Lord sees not as man sees; for a man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart" (1 Samuel 16:7).

Conclusion

We are safe to step out from behind our masks; that safety lies in our relationship with our loving Father, who sees our heart and isn't fooled by self-protective masks. Far better than following popular trends or styles, better than popularity and acceptance with the people around us, is to find our acceptance and value in our resemblance to our Creator and in His opinion of us. And how do we develop that resemblance to Him? He explained that when He commanded us to "love one another [just] as I have loved you" (John 15:12, AMP). Our love for one another is His love revealed. The more we love one another, the more we look like our Creator. That is the greatest beauty of all: love unmasked!

Quotes

"We also want to say yes to who we are, and sometimes that takes courage. If we can't accept ourselves, we can't love ourselves. If we can't love ourselves, we won't be able to love others."

—Ingrid Trobisch

"It is possible and important to be yourself with everyone, while sharing your secrets with a few." —Kerry Clarensau

Suggested Resources

- A Beautiful Life by Kerry Clarensau
- Restless by Jenni Allen
- HerGreenRoom.com

Motes:	

"Use Me, God.
Show me how to
take who I am,
who I want to
be, and what I
can do, and use
it for a purpose
greater than
myself."

-Martin Luther King Jr.



"You can never cross the ocean until you have the courage to lose sight of the shore."

-Unknown

What Valentine Can I Give Him?

By Joanna Fuchs

What can I give to Jesus
On this special Valentine's Day?
How can I tell Him I'll love Him,
And follow Him, come what may?

How can I show I need Him?

Should I send a red heart, with lace?

How can I thank Him enough

For his sacrifice, love and grace?

What Valentine can I give Him, My adoration to impart? I'll give to Him what He wants most; I'll yield to Him my heart. Twice As Sweet

By Joanna Fuchs

On Valentine's Day, we show our love;
We express our deep affections.
Those who are important to us
Get cards and sweet confections.

But Christian love is not just for The ones we hold most dear; Jesus said "love everyone;" He made that very clear.

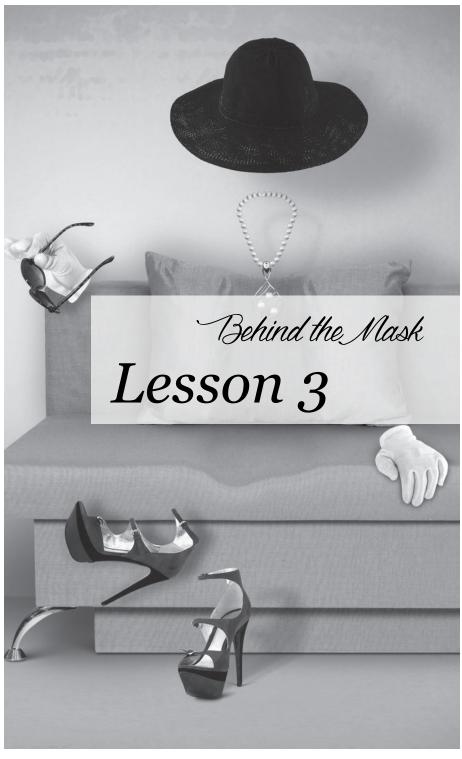
For Christians, it is every day
We should care and love and serve
Everyone we meet in life,
Whether they do or don't deserve.

Let's follow Jesus' good command

To love everyone we meet.

Valentine's Day every day

Will make life twice as sweet.



Im Not an Invisible Woman; God Sees Ne!

by Robbie Culver

Nobody sees the real me; I'm invisible; nobody cares; I'm not important.





Robbie Culver is an energetic woman who loves God with all of her heart. She is currently the women's ministry director for Central California District, Pentecostal Church of God. She has always made working for God a priority in her life. She has filled many roles in her life including Sunday school teacher, Bible study teacher, church administrator.

worship leader, youth leader, and pastor's wife. Robbie is married to Bishop Rob Culver and is the mother of three children and the grandmother of three. She holds her ministry credentials with the Pentecostal Church of God. Robbie loves to preach, teach, or bless women in any way that God allows.

I'm Not an Invisible Woman; God Sees Me! • Robbie Culver

Introduction

She gave this name to the Lord who spoke to her: "You are the God who sees me," for she said, "I have now seen the One who sees me" (Genesis 16:13). "O Lord, you have examined my heart and know everything about me" (Psalm 139:1, NLT).

The women in the Bible are so much like we are today. The feelings of insignificance can plague the strongest of women. Oftentimes we find ourselves wondering if anybody sees us—including God. For some, those feelings can be intense and feel like a plague that never goes away. Our upbringings, our background, and our experiences have shaped us or, in some cases, scarred us. Hagar was the Egyptian handmaiden of Sarai (Sarah), Abram's (Abraham) wife. Hagar must have had feelings of being insignificant because of being a handmaiden, but her life took a drastic turn. Because Sarah was barren, she offered Hagar to Abraham to bear him a child. *Read Genesis* 16:1-14.

Finding Our Value in the Wrong Places

Throughout our lives we often seek affirmation from wrong sources. It may be circumstances; it may be people, or even bad behavior. When Hagar realized that she was pregnant, she began to treat Sarah with contempt. The culture of the time put value on women who could have a child. Even though she was a slave, this pregnancy made her feel superior. Sometimes we gravitate to realities in our life to be seen. Hagar did just that. When she became pregnant, she felt she had become a woman of significance. Her feelings of importance didn't last too long. Sarah became very upset and took her complaints to Abraham, who gave her permission to deal with Hagar as she saw fit. Sarah dealt with her so harshly that Hagar ran away. It was then that she must have felt the most despondent. It was only then that she realized who really saw her. We find in Genesis 16:13 Hagar realized God saw her. She was on her way to Shur when an angel found her and spoke to her a promise. Hagar then said, "You are the God who sees." We must realize that God sees.

Tinding Our Value

The Bible teaches us that the Devil is a deceiver. He will lie to you and make it his life's goal to tell you that you are not important and that you have no value. The truth can be found in His Word.

"You made all the delicate, inner parts of my body and knit me together in my mother's womb. Thank you for making me so wonderfully complex! Your workmanship is marvelous—how well I know it. You watched me as I was being formed in utter seclusion, as I was woven together in the dark of the womb. You saw me before I was born. Every day of my life was recorded in your book. Every moment was laid out before a single day had passed" (Psalm 139:13-16, NLT).

You may not feel important, and you may not realize that who you know is why you are so significant, but when we become born again we are made new. The identification with Christ is our source of importance. The following story provides an interesting lesson in value due to association.

An American tourist in Paris, who purchased an inexpensive amber necklace in a trinket shop, was shocked when he had to pay quite a high duty on it to clear customs in New York. This aroused his curiosity, so he had it appraised. After looking at the object under a magnifying glass, the jeweler said, "I'll give you \$25,000 for it." Greatly surprised, the man decided to have

another expert examine it. When he did, he was offered \$10,000 more. "What do you see that's so valuable about this old necklace?" asked the astonished man. "Look through this glass," replied the jeweler. There before his eyes was an inscription: "From Napoleon Bonaparte to Josephine." The value of the necklace came from its identification with a famous person. Source unknown.

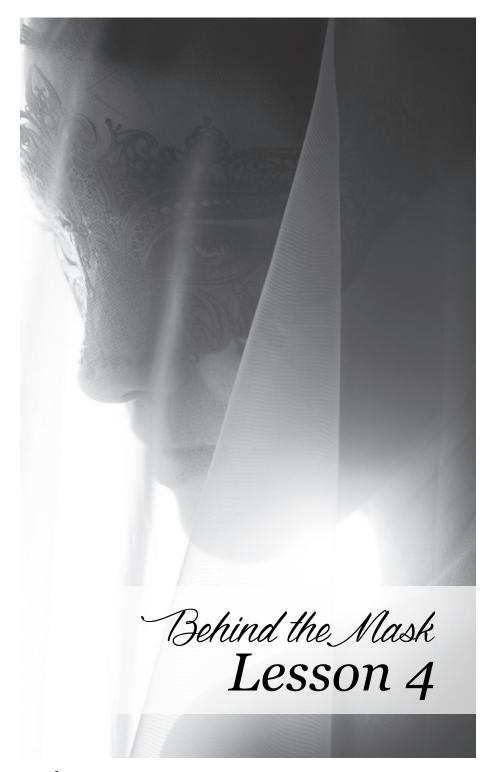
Conclusion

Our true value comes from our identification with Christ. Do you know Him today? Our identity as His child gives us true value. Your Creator not only knows the real you, and not only does He see you, but He values you. You are his workmanship. The more you develop your relationship with Him, the more you will realize how much value you have. Knowing the Word of God is the key to successful confidence. The Word of God will establish in your heart that God sees the real you. It will help you to know that you are visible; plus it will give you assurance that someone does care, which validates your importance!

"Are not two sparrows sold for a copper coin? And not one of them falls to the ground apart from your Father's will. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Do not fear therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows" (Matthew 10:29-31, NKJV).

"We must never undervalue any person. The workman loves not that his work should be despised in his presence. Now God is present everywhere, and every person is His work." —Francis de Sales "But now, O Lord, thou art our father; we are the clay, and thou our potter; and we all are the work of thy hand." —Isaiah 64:8	
Notes:	
	·

"Although no one can go back and make a brand new start, anyone can start from now and make a brand new ending." —Carl Bard



Exposing the Masquerade of Lies by Cindy Wermuth

The lie: I'm not good enough...I am insecure...I can't do anything of significance for the Kingdom of God...I am a failure...I am worthless.





Cindy Wermuth resides in Joplin, Missouri and ministers with her husband Daniel as lead pastors of Joplin Family Worship Center. She enjoys working closely with the women and music ministry. They have three sons, one daughter-in-law, and recently became foster parents of two boys.

With more than 26 years of pastoral and biblical counseling experience in church and small group settings, Cindy believes strongly

in applying biblical principles through prayer ministry and teaching aspects of her ministry. Her prayer ministry is based upon the gifting and discernment of the Holy Spirit and is characterized by a very practical analysis and application.

Cindy enjoys girls' night out, swimming, reading, and long walks on the treadmill. She has also traded her milk chocolate for dark but will still indulge in an occasional Caramello or cupcake.



Exposing the Masquerade of Lies • Cindy Wermuth

Introduction

The Bible says: "Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory and are being transformed into His likeness with ever increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit" (2 Corinthians 3:17-18).

It is the ultimate purpose of God that we be transformed into the likeness of Jesus. The lifetime process of transformation involves taking off the mask of lies, which have taken our thoughts captive, and putting on the nature of Jesus. As the Spirit of God leads us through this process, there are some key truths we need to learn and practice if we are to walk in freedom.

Lies Affect the Way We Interpret Life When my dad moved to Heaven I often felt fatherless. One Sunday morning I woke up but didn't want to get out of bed. The feeling of emptiness, void, and abandonment was too heavy for me to carry anymore. I did not realize I was suppressing a lie of being fatherless. After all it made logical sense to say, "I am fatherless now." I began to cry under the weight of what was a new fact in my life. I threw the covers over my head in hopes the rest of the world would go away because I didn't have the energy to join them that day. It was then that the Holy Spirit came crashing in on my pity party and, ever so gently, whispered in my ear: "Ask Him (God) if it's true." I inherently knew what He meant! I sensed His urgency so I didn't take time to analyze the feeling or the question he was directing me to ask. I obeyed and asked God this super simple question, and it most certainly felt like a dumb one, too: "God... am I fatherless?" Immediately He spoke a truth to my heart in a loving, enduring tone and said, "I am your Father, and I will never leave you nor forsake you." You see, I could have easily and logically come up with that very same answer, but I realized it isn't with the mind that we believe unto salvation or wholeness; it is with the heart! (Romans 10:10). This is when God removed the sting of my dad's death in my life. I can now miss my dad without the emotion of grief, which would control my day, my job, or my family. That is what I call freedom!

Believing a lie is when:

- The belief statement is planted in one's mind during the time of trauma.
- We wrongly believe someone else's trauma such as a friend, relative, or even someone through multimedia (i.e., TV, movies, books, etc.).
- A circumstance is connected to a feeling that we believe is true.

Common lies we often believe:

- I am not good enough.
- I am not loved.
- I can't do anything of significance.
- · I am a failure.
- · I am worthless.

Lies Aren't Logical
A positive indicator of whether you have identified the lie is in how true it feels, not how true it logically may be.

Example: If the memory was seeing your father walking out the door never to return, and the emotion you felt was that of fear and abandonment, the lie would very likely be:

- I am all alone.
- I am not loved or important.
- Men can't be trusted.
- If you love people they will leave you.

The lie is false but will *feel* true to the one who embraces it.

Example: If I believe I was responsible for being abused, I will feel shame. Shame matches appropriately the lie I have embraced.

Lies are a false interpretation from a past circumstance Lies dictate, control, and victimize. They must be expelled and the truth implanted. Once the truth is in place and the lie removed, the truth will produce its own appropriate and matching emotion.

Truth needs to come directly from Jesus! You can tell me the truth but that merely provides mental data. It takes the Spirit of Truth to connect with a core lie before we are able to believe. *Read John 14:6*.

Demoving the Mask of Lies
1. Get honest with God. Embrace
and take captive the lies rather
than deny or minimize them. The
more intense and honest we are
about the lie, the more intense the
Light of Truth will be when we hear
it

- 2. Believe with your *heart* not your *mind*. Ask God if the lie is true and take time to listen to Him speak.
- 3. Renounce the lie. This is a must because God gave us all authority here on earth, and He waits for us to invite Him to replace it with His truth. *Read John 8:32*.

Conclusion

God created us to be loved, protected, nurtured, and celebrated! These four things are not a mere desire; they are Godgiven needs. May you continue to reflect His glory ever increasingly as you trust Him with your everyday life!

"Where I found truth, there found I my God, who is the truth itself." —Augustine

"Truth must enter into the soul, penetrate and saturate it, or else it is of no value."—Charles Spurgeon

Notes: _		
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"I love spring anywhere, but if I could choose I would always greet it in a garden."

—Ruth Stout



"No matter how long the winter, spring is sure to follow."

-Proverb



"Spring: the music of open windows."

—Terri Guillemets

Hlabaoler Cox

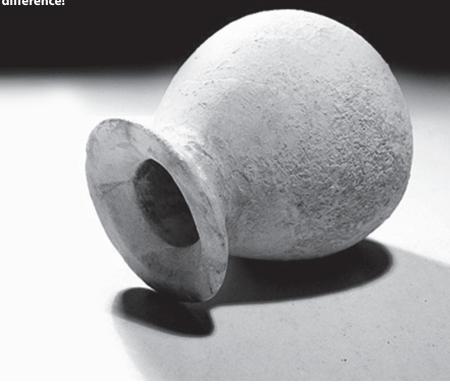
By joining with us in covenant prayer and pouring out your gift of love, you will enable our International Empowered Women's Ministries to fulfill its vision and mission to reach a world in need. Just as Mary took her alabaster box filled with costly oil and anointed the feet of Jesus, we too can give our best to show our love for Christ.

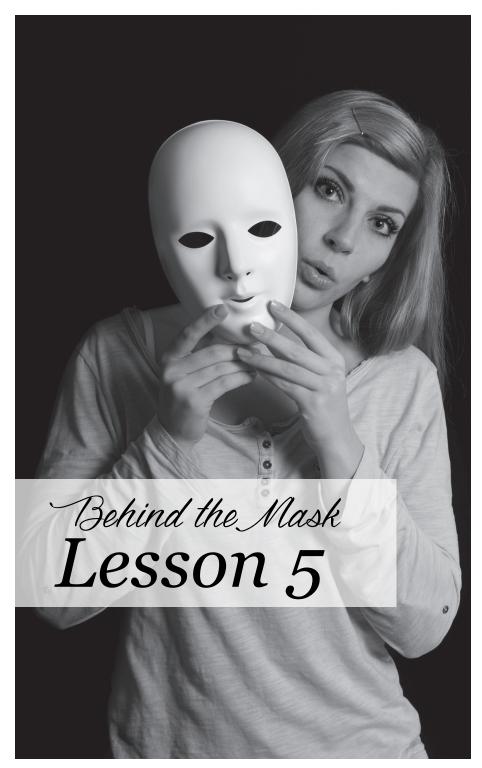
Your Alabaster Outpouring gift helps:

- Cover Administration Costs
- Children of Deceased Ministers
- Messenger College
- Missions

Alabaster Box Outpouring offerings should be sent to your District Women's Ministries Office before May 31.

Together we are making a difference!





Pipping Away the Mask: Exposing My True Identity by Michelle Rogers

It's like tearing off a Band-Aid; it's gonna hurt but if you're going to experience freedom, if you're going experience God, it must be done! Only then can you really know who you are in Christ!





Michelle Rogers has served the Pentecostal Church of God since 2008, the PCG Extension Fund since 2011, and has been the fund manager since 2013. She is working toward a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration. Michelle and her husband Josh currently reside in

Fort Worth with their daughter Lily. They are expecting their first son in January 2016.



Ripping Away the Mask: Exposing My True Identity • Michelle Rogers

Introduction

My two-year-old daughter is discovering the wonderful world of dress-up-and-pretend play. In her world putting on a dress, a necklace, and a headband makes her a princess. An empty bowl, a spoon, and a pink wooden kitchen make her a chef. A white coat, black bag, and some Band-Aids make her a doctor. In her world she can be anything she wants and she loves it. But when play time is over and she can no longer be a princess, chef, or doctor, parting with her new identity is easier said than done.

Why We Are Comfortable With the Mask

As women we never grow out of playing dress up and pretending to be something we aren't. We put on a mask to hide our pain, our fatigue, our sickness—anything less than the perfect image we aim to portray.

Growing up I wore so many masks I didn't even know who I was. I hid behind the illusion that I was quiet or shy to avoid speaking because I was afraid I would say the wrong thing. I allowed people to label me or identify me with other members of my family. In fact my name probably should have read as "Charles and Janice Scott's daughter" or my favorite, "Eric Scott's sister." I grew so accustomed to being grouped with my family I didn't even realize it was a bad thing, until one day my brother came home upset that he had been introduced to someone as "Charles Scott's son." I remember calmly walking over to him, extending my hand toward him, and saying, "Hi, I'm Eric Scott's little sister. Get over yourself!" He laughed at first, and then he apologized because he had never realized how it felt to be labeled by who you are related to. Well like I said, it had never bothered me before. So why did it bother my brother, yet I had never even given it a second thought? Because my brother knew who he was. He understood who he was in Christ. He understood that he was the person he was because of the choices he had made, both good and bad. While he was grateful and understood that he was the person he was because of our parents, he also had an identity on his own. I on the other hand was comfortable just being Charles and Janice Scott's daughter and Eric Scott's sister because it was easy and it was safe.

What ADiscovered Beneath the Mask

Hiding behind those who love me is not a horrible mask to wear. It's not a lie, it's not even really a sin, but it's not real, and it's not truly me. So who am I? It's a question I still struggle with. It's easy to once again answer by identifying the people around me. I am Josh's wife. I am Lillian's mother. I am the mother of a sweet, unnamed little angel (suggestions for boys' names welcome).

While yes those are the most important people in my life, I do have an identity of my own. I have experienced joy beyond all measure and pain beyond belief. I have experienced loss and I have experienced gain. All of those things combined with the people I love and who surround me, and a God who created me and gave me a purpose, make me who I am. I am loved. I am chosen. I am complicated. I am optimistic. I am negative. I am complicated. I am not perfect. I am accepted. I am complicated. I am quiet. I am loud. Did I mention I am complicated?!

Conclusion

My masks weren't elaborate or even fake. They were real things I could use to hide the less-thanideal parts of myself. Your masks may not be lies, but they aren't the beautiful creation that our loving Father intended for the world to see. You are a wonderful woman who cannot be described in one word. One aspect of who you are does not define you. Your family

doesn't define you. Your status in life or your job doesn't define you. Your past doesn't define you.

Allow God's word to show you who you were designed to be:

- I am greatly loved by God (Romans 1:7; Ephesians 2:4; Colossians 3:12;
 - 1 Thessalonians 1:4).
- I am complete in Him Who is the Head of all principality and power (Colossians 2:10).
- I have the mind of Christ (1 Corinthians 2:16; Philippians 2:5).
- I have the peace of God that passes all understanding (Philippians 4:7).
- I can do all things through Christ Jesus (Philippians 4:13).

Now, tear off whatever mask that you have been using to hide the real you and allow others to see the you that God created you to be!

Quotes

"God has created you for a purpose and that purpose is to be you for Him."

-Janice Scott (Lol!)

"Fear is the glue that keeps you stuck. Faith is the solvent that sets you free."

-Shannon L. Alder

"It's vital that you accept yourself and learn to be happy with who God made you to be. If you want to truly enjoy your life, you must be at peace with yourself."

Joel Osteen, Your Best Life Now:7 Steps to Living at Your FullPotential

Motes:

Happy Mother's Day May 8, 2016



a**M**azing
l**O**ving
s**T**rong
Happy
s**E**lfless
g**R**aceful



Don't Be Fooled by the Masks I Wear

by Charles C. Finn

(From the poem, Please Hear What I'm Not Saying)

on't be fooled by me.
Don't be fooled by the
face I wear. I wear a
mask. I wear a thousand
masks—masks that I'm afraid to
take off; and none of them are me.

Pretending is an art that is second nature to me, but don't be fooled. I give the impression that I am secure, that all is sunny and unruffled within me as well as without; that confidence is my name and coolness is my game, that the water is calm and I am in command; that I need no one. But don't believe me, please. My surface may seem smooth, but my surface is my mask, my ever varying and ever concealing mask.

Beneath lays no smugness, no complacence. Beneath dwells the real me in confusion, in fear,/in aloneness. But I hide that. I don't

want anyone to know it. I panic at the thought of my weaknesses and fear being exposed. That's why I franticly create a mask to hide behind, a nonchalant, sophisticated façade to help me pretend, to help shield me from the glance that knows. But such a glance is precisely my salvation, my only salvation, and I know it. That is, if its followed by acceptance, if it is followed by love.

It's the only thing that can liberate me from myself, from my own self-built prison walls, from the barriers I so painstakingly erect. It's the only thing that will assure me of what I can't assure myself, that I am really worth something. Who am I, you may wonder? I am someone you know very well. I am every man you meet and I am every woman you meet.

Behind the Mask Lesson 6

Covered by God's Grace by Claudia 4. Hernander

The mask is gone; you feel exposed: It's only here that you realize you're covered by something more concealing than the mask ever was; you're hidden by His grace.



Claudia Y. Hernandez was born in Mexico, raised in Texas, and met her husband Isaac in Minnesota. Claudia and Isaac have been married for more than 12 years. God has given them three wonderful children: two boys named Abel and Joel, and a little princess named Galilea. They are true miracles and a blessing to their lives.

Claudia has had the privilege of serving as the Minnesota women's ministry director for more than three years. She has been a faithful member of Victory Covenant Church for 11-plus years. During this time she has served as the church secretary and worked with the children's, youth, and women's ministries. One of her greatest passions is singing to the Lord in the worship team with her husband Isaac.



Covered by God's Grace • Claudia Y. Hernandez

Introduction

If walking with the Lord has taught me anything, it has been that there is nothing you can do to lose God's grace and infinite love. He loves you just the way you are, with all your virtues and imperfections. God has always known who you really are behind that mask, but now that you have exposed yourself to Him, get ready to experience a new phase in your relationship with your Heavenly Father. You must let him do the work in you and redefine who you are in Him. "After your season of suffering, God in all His grace will restore, confirm, strengthen and establish you" (1 Peter 5:10).

Gods Never-ending Love

Recognizing and fully understanding His grace and love has been one of the greatest challenges throughout my walk with the Lord. Because once I gather the courage to confess my faults to Him, I find myself standing before a mirror realizing how imperfect and flawed I am; and I often ask myself how such a perfect God can love a sinner like me. I know that I can't keep hiding from the Almighty God and his never-ending love. It is in that moment I realize how much I mean to him and how his grace covers all of my imperfections.

I was listening to the radio station the other day and the speaker said something that impacted my life greatly. She said, "I have a challenge for all of those who are listening. I want you to dedicate five minutes of your day for a month, meditating on the love God has for you. All you have to do is think about how much God loves you." He loves you so much that he gave his only Son Jesus Christ to die on that cross for you. He already paid the price of any sin or imperfection you might be carrying. So why don't you just let go of whatever is holding you back, shake off that old dust, and look forward to the promises God has for your life?

Just pause for a moment and let that truth sink into your heart. You are His, and He is your Father. Everything that you are is hidden in his grace and majesty. It is not because of any of your merits that you deserve his grace, but it is by his sacrifice that you are justified. "By the blood of Jesus I am justified, and God sees me as if I had never sinned"—*Billy Graham*.

Never Alone

The Bible tells us in Psalm 139 that the Lord has searched us and that he knows us. He knows when we sit and when we rise; he knows the words that will come out of our mouth even before we say them. There is no where we can run to hide from his Spirit or his presence; that fact is simply amazing. It means you are not in this alone. He has been with you every step of the way.

I grew up in a very divided home because my mother was Christian and my father was Catholic. Against my father's will, my mother took my brothers and me to every church service. Often after church services we would come home to a father who was drunk and furious. When that happened my mother knew the price she had to pay. I would take my little brothers into our room and cover our ears as we heard the beatings my dad would shed upon my mother. I hated her so much because I could not understand how she could talk about a loving and merciful God, yet she was living such a miserable life. I would close my eyes and ask God for help. I asked him to change our father or to give my mother the courage to leave him. I would say "if you are real please answer my prayers," but my prayers were never answered

Throughout my teen years I grew up in church, but I did not know God and could not understand His love for me. It was not until I was 19 years of age that I fully surrendered to His will in my life, and it was in that moment God answered all of the prayers that I had given Him as a child. He did not change my father, but he assured me that he had been with me every step of the way and that he had a plan for my life. His grace filled my life in that moment and I have never been the same since.

Conclusion

There is nothing that can hold you back once God sets you free. So don't ever believe the Devil's lies about who you really are. You are his princess; you are a new creation; you are loved and forgiven. You are hidden by His grace.

Quotes

"You see the depths of my heart and you love me the same. You are an amazing God." —Unknown

"What if your blessings come through raindrops..." —Laura Story

Notes:	 	

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HAPPY FATHER'S DAY JUNE 19, 2016

"A father is neither an anchor to hold us back, nor a sail to take us there, but a guiding light whose love shows us the way."

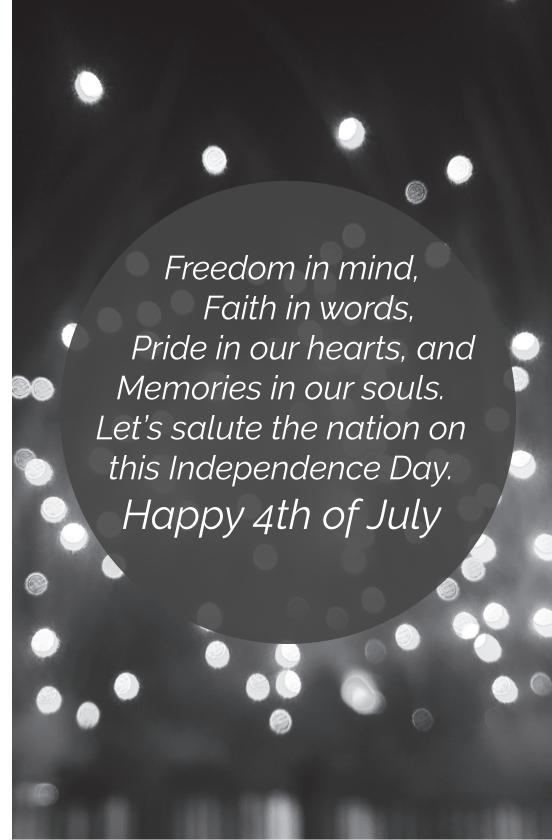
—Unknown

–Unknown



"Dad—A son's first hero and a daughter's first love."

-Unknown





Uncovering God's Favor by Nancy Snead

Once you understand the grace of God; that there is nothing that you could ever do to deserve it or earn it; He just gave it to you: Then you begin to uncover the realization that you are also the recipient of His favor.





Nancy Snead is a PCG-

credentialed minister who lives in South Texas with Roy, her husband of 41 years, and her special sister Peggy. Her family members also include son Justin and daughter-in-law Samantha, who have two young girls: Alexandra and Victoria; and daughter Lisa and son-in-law Michael, who have three children: Carter, Jack, and Kathryn (the oldest granddaughter who attends St. Mary's School of Law).

Sister Snead and her husband both worked for the airlines in their youth—he was a pilot and she may have served your coffee! They are active members of their home church, New Beginnings in Rockport, Texas, where Sister Snead leads the "Jewels of Jesus" ministry for young girls. The Sneads feel blessed to live in the country, where their family enjoys the diverse wildlife.



Uncovering God's Favor • Nancy Snead

Introduction

Favor: Unfair partiality

To be Favored: To be provided with advantages; specially privileged!

Example of God's Favor

There is probably no greater example of God's favor than what we see in the life of Queen Esther. She entered the kingdom as an orphan and through obedience, submission, and the favor of God, she was raised to the highest position in the palace as she became one with her king!

The competition was fierce! With the exception of Esther, all the other women used their own strength and the strength of the world to gain favor in the eyes of the king. Esther, however, was different. She depended entirely on God's unmerited favor. Consequently, Esther did not have to struggle. She rested in the Lord and humbled herself, and the Lord promoted her and exalted her above all the other beautiful women. Her favor did not come from the world. It was that *unfair partiality* with all its *special privileges* and *advantages* that only the Lord can provide.

The Value of God's Tavor

"...And Esther obtained favor in the sight of all who saw her" (Esther 2:15). "And the king loved Esther more than all the other women, and she obtained grace and favor in his sight more than all the virgins; so he set the royal crown upon her head and made her queen..." (Esther 2:17). All that we need to live a life *in His favor* has already been given to us. Jesus said from the cross, "It is finished."

If you see yourself as less than His cherished, favorite daughter maybe it is time to just sit quietly at His feet and let Him remind you of how special you are to Him.

How To Get God's Favor

We are the righteousness of God in Christ Jesus. We have been given access into the Holy of Holies. The more you have faith in operation to believe His word, the more He will establish you in it!

Esther did not consider her life nearly as important as doing the will of God. "...and if I perish, I perish" (Esther 4:16). Queen Esther needed an encounter with God. She needed the favor of God as she went before the king. The Word of God can take the weakest areas of your life and turn them into your greatest strengths for Him. "And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man" (Luke 2:52). Never let the odds keep you from doing what you know in your heart you were meant to do.

I am greatly blessed, highly favored, and deeply loved! The story of Esther should strike a chord in the heart of anyone who has been called into service for the Lord. No matter the danger, no matter the risk, keep your eyes focused on what pleases your King. Because of the Lord's favor. He will give you influence to be a blessing to those around you. Like Esther, you too will stand out in a crowd, adorned with grace and favor! Because of Esther, the Jews were spared to receive the heritage that was theirs. I encourage you today: "Rejoice, highly favored one!"

Conclusion

Enjoy the special privileges, advantages, and unfair partiality that are yours as a precious daughter of the living King!

Quotes

"The things you do for yourself are gone when you are gone, but the things you do for others remain as your legacy."—Kalu Ndukwe Kalu "I am NOT afraid, I was born to do this."—Joan of Arc

"Nothing is Impossible. The word itself says I'm possible!" —Audrey Hepburn

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Behind the Mask Lesson 8

Discovering My True Identity by Brandy Harvey

I am emotionally secure; I no longer have selfesteem issues but am fully aware of my Christesteem; I am more than a conqueror; I am not fearful but strong in faith. I know who I am!





Brandy Harvey serves alongside her husband as pastors of CornerStone Worship Center, in Bedford, Indiana. She is the mom to three pretty amazing kids.

Brandy loves her roles as wife, mom, and pastor's wife, but her

all-time favorite title is daughter of the King!



Discovering My True Identity • Brandy Harvey

Introduction

I'm pretty sure we can all remember a time, age, or season when we've dealt with insecurity. It is that gut-wrenching feeling of not measuring up, not fitting in, or feeling like you're not good enough; and there is nobody who truly understands you. If we are honest, we've probably all gone through this season more than once. I know I have! I can still recall those moments as a teenager trying to figure out who I was, soon followed by adulthood transition times of becoming a wife, mom, and partner in ministry with my husband. Now all these titles I love, but who am I aside from the titles, job descriptions, and roles...who am I?

The Heart

We can get so caught up in being what we think we should be that we lose our own identity. Reality is this: Aside from all your other titles there is one that stands out, that demands attention, that must be discovered for you to be who you are destined to be. You are a daughter of the King! Wow! Me? With all my flaws and shortcomings, even when I don't measure up to someone else's demands on me, I am (and you are) a daughter of the most high God! You see in order to throw our insecurities out the window, we must know who we are! On my own I am nothing and I will fail often, but with Him I am more than a conqueror. Romans 8:37 says, "Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us."

We go through seasons in our lives. Let's look at Naomi for a minute. Her very name means "my delight." However, when life threw her some hard, unfair curveballs, her identity began to crumble. After the death of her husband and sons, she told people to call her Mara, which means "bitterness." Naomi did what many of us do. She had allowed her titles (wife and mom) to become her identity, and when those titles were taken away from her she lost her identity. This is why it's vital for us to know who we are in Christ! Through time Naomi was restored, emotionally healed, and once again had her joy back.

Real Life

It all sounds great, but how do we actually arrive at this place—having God confidence, an identity secure by who we are in God? Truth is, I'm

not sure we arrive but, without a doubt, we definitely grow in God confidence. We get into the Word and discover scriptures like 1 Corinthians 6:19-20, where it talks about us being His-not our own. We must spend personal time away from everyone and every distraction so God can actually speak into our hearts, and we can actually hear what He has to say! We allow so many noises to steal our precious alone time. I think we girls are notorious for putting just about everything before alone time and that is the very heart of the issue. Every relationship we have will be stronger when we learn to develop and discipline ourselves to have daily time with our Savior! When we learn to discover our own God-given talents and quit focusing on what others try to force on us, something amazing begins to happen. You begin to discover your own God identity! Be you because that is who He designed you to be! But remember, like Naomi, you will go through seasons. Seasons that will shake you, seasons that will make you doubt, and seasons that will develop you. These seasons good and bad—will all play a role in your God-confident you! The question really goes back to you: Will you allow God to use every moment in your life to develop you, or will you allow self and others to fit you into their own agenda? There is a song titled "I Give Myself Away," and some of the words say, "My life is not my own, to You I belong, I give myself, I give myself away." As long as we hold on to our insecurities, shortcomings, fears, and doubts, we will struggle over

and over again with who we are. To truly be the confident woman that God Himself intends for you to be, you must let go (oh so hard for us girls to do) and let God have His way in your life. The journey will be frightening at times, but the peace you will have is like none other.

Full Circle

Don't allow a season to steal who you are in Christ! You are a precious daughter of the King, royal priesthood and, simply put, God adores you! Earnestly seek Him and discover who you are in Him, aside from all the *hats* you wear. He has so much more for you than you can even hope or dream. It will take action on your part, and you may have to throw out some of your thoughts towards yourself, but it will be oh so worth it!

Quotes

"We delight in the beauty of the butterfly, but rarely admit the changes it has gone through to achieve that beauty."

—Maya Angelou

"For You formed my inward parts; You covered me in my mother's womb. I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Marvelous are Your works, and that my soul knows very well."

—Psalm 139:13-14

Motes:	

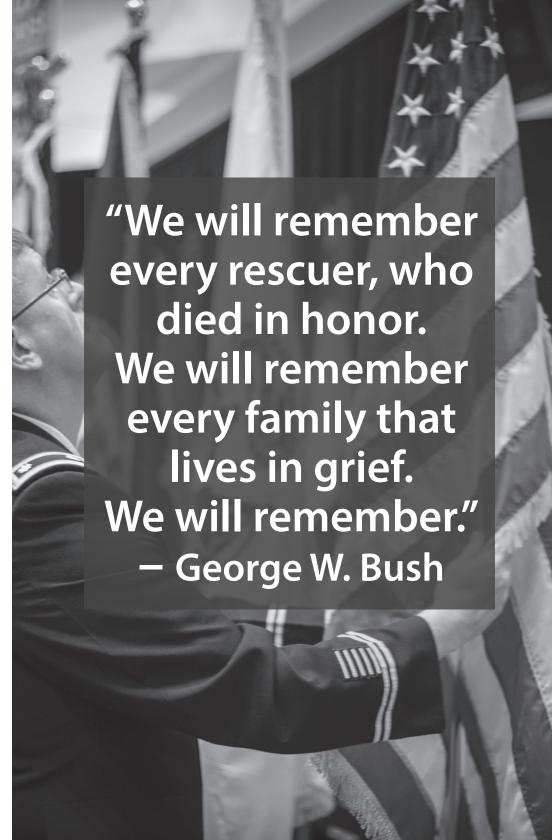
"Whatever you do, work at it with all of your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men."

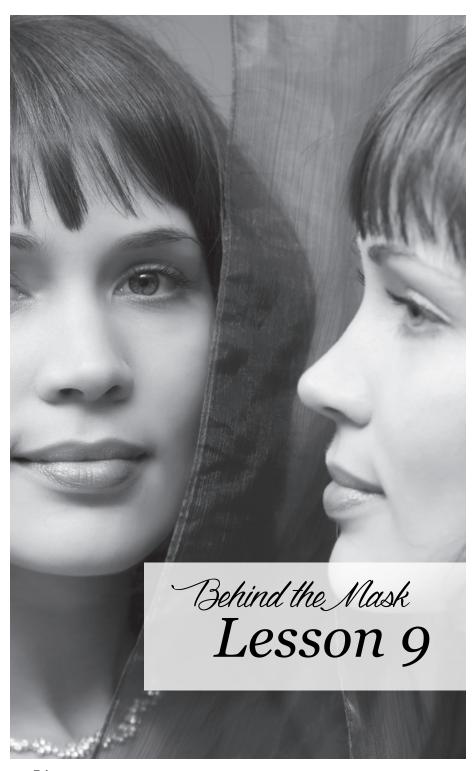
-Colossians 3:23



"Genius begins great works; labor alone finishes them."

—Joseph Joubert





A New Ne in the Nirror by Janie Kincaid

I am not ashamed of who I am! I am fearfully and wonderfully made. I am loved and valued by the One who created me.





Janie Kincaid is an ordained minister and the wife of Virgil Kincaid, director of the World Missions Department for the Pentecostal Church of God. Prior to working alongside her husband at PCG Headquarters (and wherever their travels take them), she was a missionary in Trinidad & Tobago, West Indies for 22 years. Prior to

that time she served as singles pastor, evangelist, and pastor with her late husband, Jerry Johnson. Sister Kincaid has ministered in churches and women's conferences nationally and internationally. One of her greatest joys is to minister alongside not only her husband, but her children and grandchildren.



A New Me in the Mirror • Janie Kincaid

Introduction

Too often women suffer from low self-esteem and inferiority. They hide behind a mask pretending to be unfriendly or uncaring simply because they feel unworthy of being someone's friend. They fear rejection and, therefore, are unwilling to take the risk of reaching out to others. It is a lonely place behind that mask. Yet there is a false security...these women feel no one can hurt them as long as they remain hidden and secluded behind the mask.

The Old Me I Saw

I was once such a person. As a child I was ashamed of my physical imperfections—thick glasses and a big nose! Kids at school made fun of me from grade school through high school. In my teen years I would try to cover my hurt by joking about it. But inside I wished I were different and felt ashamed of my appearance and who I was. As an adult I wanted to *fix* the imperfections—even contemplated plastic surgery with hopes that would eliminate the insecurity.

The New Me He Sees

As a grown woman I came to know Jesus! He totally turned my life around! He healed all those broken places inside me and revealed His Word, letting me know that He made me in His image and in His likeness! From Genesis 1:26: "Then God said, 'Let us make man in our image, in our likeness..." His Word told me—and still tells me—that I am fearfully and wonderfully made!

Further reassurance comes from Psalm 139:13-16: "For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well. My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place, when I was woven together in the depths of the earth. Your eyes saw my unformed body; all the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be."

When His Word became alive in me, I then realized I didn't need to fix what He created. He made me just exactly like He wanted me to be! For the first time in my life I could look in the mirror and accept myself as I was and be happy about it. I no longer had to hide behind a mask. I could reach out to people and not be afraid of rejection. Because He accepted me and was pleased with His creation, I could accept myself too.

The Mew Me See Too
The strange and wonderful thing
is that I no longer looked like I
did before accepting Jesus Christ.
My appearance changed. No,
my nose didn't shrink—it's still
the same and I still have thick
glasses! (Although I don't wear
them unless absolutely necessary;
I wear contacts!) But there was
life and joy in my countenance.

Jeremiah 29:11 says, "For I know the plans I have for you,' declares the Lord, 'plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." Thank God for those plans!

Now as I have the opportunity to minister to women around this globe, I can share with them the love of Christ and assure them that they too are fearfully and wonderfully made and that God loves them. They have nothing to be ashamed of because they are made in His image and in His likeness! He loves them and has a plan for their lives as well. No more hiding behind a mask

of inferiority and intimidation. We are free to be the women God created us to be and to fulfill the plans that He has for our lives.

Quotes

"Be yourself. Don't let your weakness intimidate you. God gave you gifts, talents, and skill for His purpose. Don't compare your weaknesses to other people's strengths."

-Raymond F. Culpepper

Motes:

GHT

Help Empowered Women's Ministries Light Another Candle for:





Ahikam Children's Home



Impact Appalachia





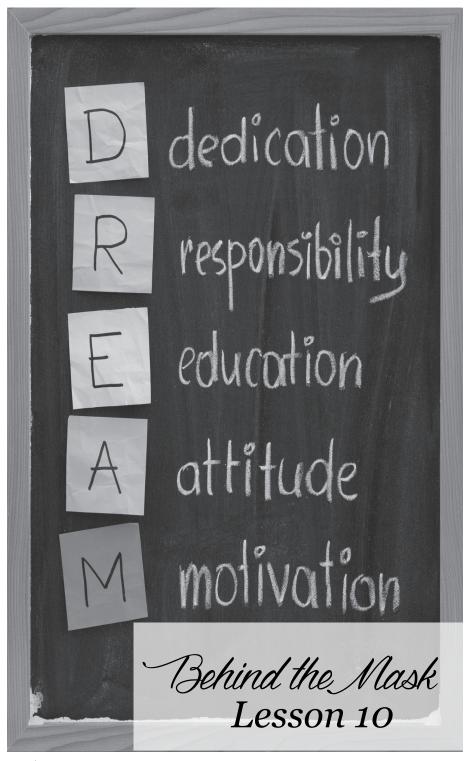


Piana Gee Homeless Outreach



AND

October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month!



New Dreams Revealed by Becky Dickett

I know who I am in Christ; now I can begin to dream God-sized dreams!



Becky Pickett lives in
Northern Iraq with her tall, dark,
and handsome husband and six
amazing kids. She fills her days
with baby kisses, Dr. Seuss, homeschooling, Legos, deciphering
Arabic and baby talk, hospitality,
chocolate, and steaming black tea.



New Dreams Revealed • Becky Pickett

Introduction

Jesus will reveal our life assignments to us—if we are serious about remembering them. Record these things reverently into prayer journals and see what begins to unfold.

Your Personal Log

Get quiet and seek God passionately. Keep in mind He never stops talking to His girls! Tune into His radio frequency, tune out the static, and then record all He says into your beautiful prayer journal. (It needs to be a pretty book!) For 25 years I've written every special thing from God, big or small, into my prayer journals—confirming words, God-ideas, sermon phrases, prophetic words, visions, and night dreams. Many things He whispered had to be put on the shelf for years while He grew my character. Yet I have seen numerous dreams fulfilled. Many haven't been fulfilled, but I believe they will be when the time is right. That's why they're in my journals. I often remind God of them and pray over them!

Reflection: Do a Bible word-study on books. God values books.

- Are you currently able to hear God's voice? Why/why not?
- Are you an in-one-ear-and-out-the-other listener to God?
- How can you work quiet God-time into your schedule?
- Is it time to invest in a beautiful prayer journal?
- Have you written in it recently as you keep it with your Bible during quiet times?
- What are some dreams you've seen fulfilled over the years?
- What personal dreams are still in the prayer process?

Garden Friends

Our quiet time with God is so important, but we also need praying sister-friends (aka *garden friends*) to help fulfill God's dreams in our lives. Consider this story: Jesus invited his three closest friends into Gethsemane, where He shared honestly about his heavy, hurting heart and said he needed their prayers and emotional support. Though Jesus had crowds and disciples, He only took Peter, James, and John with him into the garden. Think carefully about who Jesus turned to in this time of need. Who would you turn to? God plans for His girls to have

loyal, faithful, loving, interested, and concerned sister-friends. My praying friends are my lifetime friends...pray together, stay together.

Reflection: There is a friend who sticks closer than a brother. A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for adversity. "That they may be one, as we are one" (John 17:22).

- Are we that friend to Jesus?
- To whom are we that friend?
- How many friends did Jesus take into Gethsemane?
- How many garden friends can we expect/sustain in our lives?
- Who are these friends in my life?

Jearning from Jesus Jesus helps us overcome the temptation to isolate and withdraw. Our lifeblood comes from our Godordained connections. Read Mark 14:32-40 and Luke 22:40.

Peter, James, and John did let Jesus down. Yet despite the hurt and disappointment, Jesus didn't come out of the garden vowing to never trust a friend again. Most likely, every one of us has experienced betrayal or relationship loss. Jesus' example is a lesson in overcoming the following:

Temptation #1—"I will never share my heart with anyone again...I will keep everyone at arm's length...I won't ever let myself be hurt like that again!" (isolation)

Temptation #2—"I can't go to prayer group today because something has come up—crazy kids, drama, distractions, dirty house, feeling tired, sick, hormonal..." (withdrawal)

Reflection: Read John 17:23.

- Who are the friends you felt the most surprised and betrayed by in your darkest adversity?
- Have you walked through the forgiveness and healing journey?
- Are you currently withdrawing or isolating yourself from others?
- How can you begin to engage with others in a healthy way?
- Are you at a place where you are able to open your heart to new sister-friends God could bring into your life?

As we understand who we are in Christ—through our journal writings, prayers with garden friends, and application of Jesus' many lessons—God's dreams for us will be revealed and realized.

Lessons to Remember Even Bible superheroes needed honesty, emotional support, and prayer in their relationships.

1. Read Daniel 2:17-19

Daniel told his companions the stressful details, asked for their prayers, and God answered them.

2. Read Daniel 3:16-18, 25 Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego spoke in the plural as they defied the king! Jesus and the friends went through the fire together.

3. Read Acts 4:23-33

The apostles went to their own company, shared their challenges, and prayed together in one accord.

4. Read Matthew 26:36-56 Jesus shared, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death." He was feeling comfortable sharing his emotions and asking for prayer.

Stick with your spouse, family, pastors, local church, sister-friends, and be their greatest strengtheners. We must be lifetime-longevity-covenant-minded in our personal relationships, our local church, and the Body of Christ.

Reflection: Where two or three are gathered, He is there...

- Whom has God called alongside you?
- To whom have you been called alongside?

Celebrate

Celebrate with friends who make your baby jump! Make prayertimes happen with them.

Elisabeth shouted to Mary, "You make my baby jump!" and Mary burst into song in response!

Some sister-friends just make our dream-babies leap for joy! When we talk, our hearts get stirred up and happy. It becomes easy to speak into each other's lives faith and encouragement regarding the "things told us from the Lord."

These sisters will pray us through adversity, and we will pray them through adversity! When we stand

before the throne, we'll say, "Jesus, we didn't try to make it alone as lone soldiers. We're all here. We were interconnected with each other's lives, through the years!

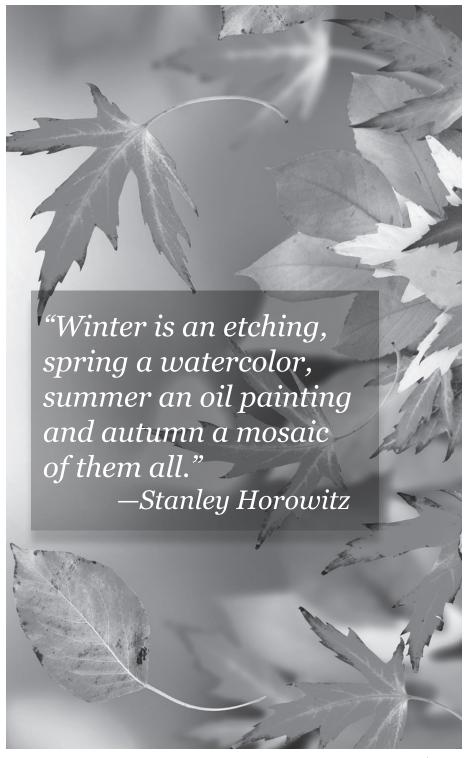
In my life, I've practiced "God's agenda praying" on a weekly basis, with a prayer partner, for years. This happens on video Skype as I pray from Iraq. Singing, meditating, and praying sentence prayers through each day (such as "Lord be with my husband right now in his meeting") are a given in our Christian walk. But in order to progress in the plan of God, I have found it necessary to schedule a weekly, focused prayer time in which we pray about "God's agenda" or "God's plans" for our lives, for that week. We pray in tongues, we pray Scriptures, we pray as we are led by the Holy Spirit, and we write down in our prayer journals special words that surfaced through prayer. It's in this lifestyle, we advance in the things of God, not just maintain the status quo.

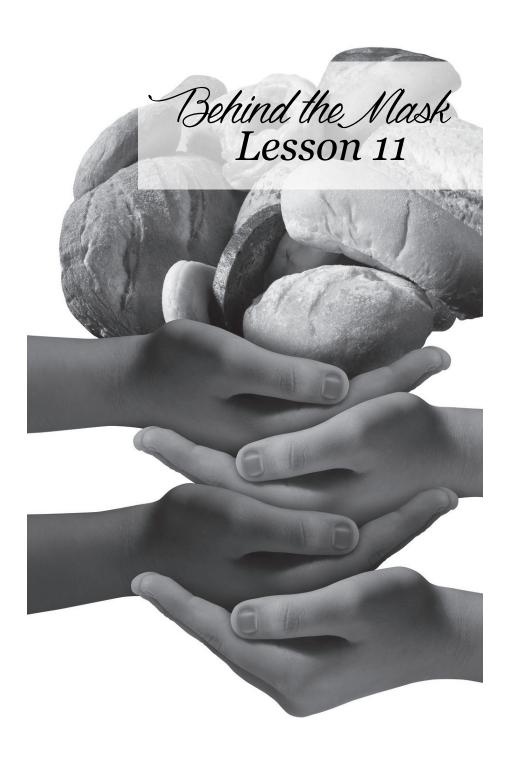
Reflection: Proverbs 14:1 Every wise woman builds her house.

- Do you have a friend who makes your baby jump?
- Do you pray with a friend/friends on a consistent basis? Why/why not?
- Can you take initiative and pursue the company of wise women of God?
- Can you schedule in phone calls to special friends?
- Who are the special ladies you have prayed with over the years?

Prayer	
Father God, I pray we	
will occupy until Jesus	
comes! Because Jesus	
is coming! I long to see	
ladies linking arms!	
I desire to see sisters	
linking hearts! I pray	
that we're linking our	
voices in prayer! And	
most of all, I pray that	
the God-sized dreams	
in our individual hearts	
will build the global	
Church in many ways!	
In Jesus' Name, Amen	<u> </u>
Motes:	
v wees	







Loving Beyond the Mask by Dawn Cottman

Hiding behind the mask kept me focused inward. Now that I am free from the mask and its deception, I can truly love others the way that Christ loves me.



Pastor Dawn Coffman is focused on helping people understand their potential and reaching for it! Her strong love for God has helped shape her to be the wife, mother, and grandmother that she is today. Pastor Dawn's life was radically changed at age 14 when she surrendered her life to Jesus—so much so that she began preaching several months later. For the past 41 years she has pastored alongside her husband and shared her teachings via

camps, women's conferences, and bus ministry. She has dedicated her life to the joy of serving others inside the church walls, as well as on the streets of her community. Dawn and her husband pastor at Echoes From Calvary Church in Salinas, California.

"For with God nothing is impossible" (Luke 1:37).



Loving Beyond the Mask • Dawn Coffman

Introduction - Why do Deople Wear Masks?

Criminals often use a mask to avoid being identified. Partygoers may wear a mask to be a part of the fun. For a short time we are not ourselves and can interact with people around us based on this altered reality. When we take an honest look at our lives, we recognize certain times when we are using a mask—sometimes purposely but many times unconsciously.

Some have been hurt or carry insecurities and put on a mask for protection. Jesus heals our hurt and provides security in his love. Now we are free to love others. We can remind those around us of their true value—as a creature made in the very image of God—by treating them with love and dignity.

Others wear the mask because they carry guilt and do not want to be identified by their true deeds. Jesus bore our guilt and makes us righteous before God. Now we are free to love people without judgment or fear of judgment, knowing that only the gift of the grace of God, not any person's actions, makes any of us righteous.

Remember, a mask is essentially a covering. In medical procedures the final stage of the healing process usually involves removing the covering, bandage, or brace. It is only then that the part can become useful again and truly fulfill its original purpose. In the same way, when we are healed by Christ's love and righteousness, we can remove our mask and find the fulfillment that comes with living out our true purpose—loving others the way Christ has loved us.

Living and Loving Beyond the Mask
Jesus taught us how to fulfill our purpose in John 6 when he faced 5,000

Jesus taught us how to fulfill our purpose in John 6 when he faced 5,000 hungry followers. When the disciples looked at the situation, they only saw the problem and wanted to send the people away so they would not feel responsible. They were still living behind a mask of insecurity, believing that the little they had—five loaves and two fish—would never be enough. It seems like we always believe what we have is not enough. We don't stop to realize that it isn't our job to make it enough. It is our job to give what we have to God. God is responsible to make it enough—and He always will! Jesus was free from such inward thinking and could only see

two things: the need of the people and the goodness of his Father. He first offered what he had (the loaves and fish) to God with gratitude and then offered it to the people. As is always the case, God stretched the gift not only to supply the needs of the people, but also to leave an overflow for the disciples to collect.

The person who finds fulfillment in life finds purpose by helping others needs to be met. It works every time!

The first year both of our daughters were not able to be home for Thanksgiving, I experienced a tug of depression, which turned into feeling very sorry for myself. (God does bring women out of depression, and I believe he does it when we give out of our nothing.) Then God told me flat out: "There are many people around you feeling that same way. Why not meet their need?" So I began inviting a few other lonely people in the church to celebrate Thanksgiving dinner at our home. As we began to love and support each other during the difficult holiday time, our vision slowly turned away from our own need and we began to see a vast need around us. The dinner outgrew our house and moved to the church, where we tried to create a loving home atmosphere. After seven years we found ourselves serving hundreds of local homeless, isolated veterans, senior citizens, and other hurting members of the community. The local TV and radio station even got behind us and the

inspiring story of God's love for the "least among us" shined in the community. The holiday went from a time of hurt to a time of healing and fulfillment! Unfortunately, space does not permit me to share all the stories of those who took their masks off and learned to serve, not to mention the masks we saw fall off the people we served.

Conclusion

In the natural it may not look like you have what it takes to live a life of fulfillment or purpose, but looks are so very deceiving! God has blessed you so that you can be a blessing. Will you not only come from behind your mask, but also look beyond other people's masks and share the powerful unconditional love of your God?

Quotes

"The purpose of life is not to be happy. It is to be useful, to be honorable, to be compassionate and to have it make some difference that you have lived and lived well."

-Ralph Waldo Emerson

"No one has ever become poor by giving."—Anne Frank

"If you can find out how best you can help and bless others on this planet you are close to finding your wealthy place and your niche in this life."—Tommy Barnett

Notes:		_
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Resources for Help

There's a Miracle In Your House

—Tommy Barnett

The Power of a Half-Hour —Tommy Barnett

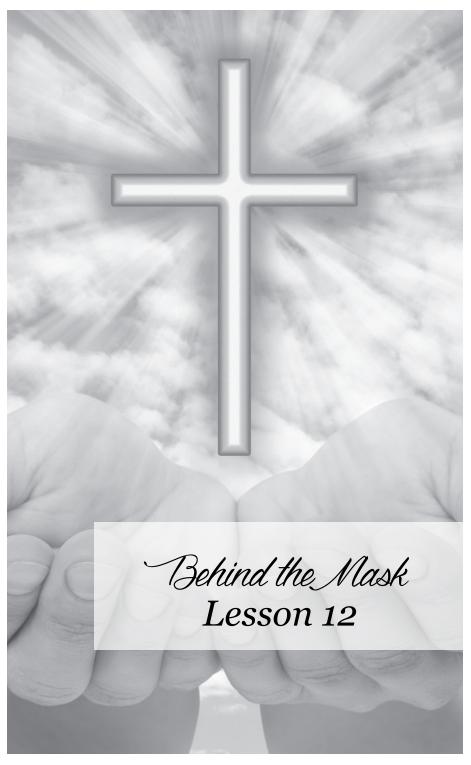
The Power of Serving
Others
—Gary Morsch &
Dean Nelson



"There is always, always, always something to be thankful for."

-Unknown





Discovering My Timitless Potential in Christ by Edith Attoh

The lies of the mask kept me bound to my past failures and my weaknesses. The truth of God's Word has made me free! I can do all things!





Edith Attoh is married to UK General Bishop Daniel Attoh. They have three beautiful children. Edith serves alongside her husband as pastors of Dominion Chapel International Church (PCG) in Manchester, England. Edith is also a qualified nurse, midwife, and social worker. She has a passion to see the broken

healed, delivered, and restored back to their relationship with God. She is also passionate about imparting biblical truths into the lives of young people to establish and build their faith. Additionally, she is the PCGUK National Women's Ministries director. Her desire is to see women rise up to know who they are in Christ and become all that God has created them to be.



Discovering My Limitless Potential in Christ • Edith Attoh

Introduction

There are times in life when we feel we have failed God too many times to be effectively used by Him again. I remember periods in my life when, even though I was dutifully attending all church functions and completing my allocated responsibilities, deep down inside I was unable to fully walk in my God-given potential, due to reminders of previous mistakes and failures of the past.

Do You See Yourself as God Sees You? In the Book of Esther, we see the description of a beautiful queen, who was handpicked by the king for her outstanding qualities and beauty (Esther 2:15-17). However, there was more to her purpose than her beauty and, like Esther, there are times when we may not see ourselves the way God sees us—or have an understanding of the very task that God has destined us to achieve. The assignment in our hands may look far too big and outside our capabilities (Esther 4:9). The risk of Esther going before the king without being invited warranted an undesirable consequence, which few of us would be willing to bear. Still, the Lord reminds us through His gentle Holy Spirit that it is not about what we can do in our own strength, but what He has commissioned us to do through His grace and favor.

Gideon had the same identity limitation when he referred to himself as being "the least" in his family, even though God had specifically called him to deliver Israel from their enemies (Judges 6:15). God doesn't look at our limitations or what we can or cannot do. He is not interested in how we may look on the outside. It's more about what we look like on the inside, and whether we are willing and available to take that step of faith to accomplish His perfect will through us (1 Samuel 16:7).

Sometime, God may ask us to take on a seemingly impossible task, which does not actually make sense and is beyond our human reasoning. The woman with the alabaster box had a past, and who knows whether this included feelings of low self-worth and failure. Nevertheless, she was obedient to the call and walked through the criticisms and insults of those who reminded her of her past, in order to pour out her sacrificial offering of worship and adoration at the Master's feet (Luke 7:39). It must have

taken a lot of courage, but she knew if she could only touch the "hem of His garment" all things would be made new.

Who Do You See in the Mirror? We all wear a mask of some sort during seasons in our lives, and at times this can keep us under a false sense of security and willingness to adopt a mediocre lifestyle. The good news is your past does not have to determine your future. God has great things in store for us to achieve. He knows His plans for us; they are for our good and will bring us to an expected end (Jeremiah 29:11). God reminds us in His Word to not remember the former things, the former mistakes, and the former failures, "neither consider the things of old," because He is doing a "new thing" in our lives and it will flow forward like rivers and springs in dry places (Isaiah 43:18-19). God's potential in us is limitless if only we will remove the mask of fear and self-doubt, and press forward to discover and fulfill His full potential in us!

It took me a long time to realize that every step of my life and ministry has been ordered and predestined by the Lord. Even along the journey where I had failed God and chose to do things my way, He has a way of bringing me back and working all things out together for my own good (Romans 8:28).

Indeed, now is the time for us to enlarge the place of our tents, spread out to the right and the left, shake off every limitation and the lies of the past, and take hold of God's limitless potential for our lives, for who knows whether you have come into the kingdom for such a time as this. Arise beautiful woman of God and take on the strength of Deborah, the wisdom of Abigail, the bravery of Rahab, the worship of Hannah, and the faithfulness of Ruth. God is limitless and He desires us to discover our immeasurable potential in Him!

Drayer

Father, help us to begin to see ourselves the way that you see us; help us to remove every limitation and hindrance that has held us back over the years and press forward into the newness of life, which you sacrificed to give us. We acknowledge that we can do all things through Christ who strengthens us and we thank you that whatever you have started in us, you are faithful to complete—to the glory of your name.

Quotes

"I may not be where I need to be but I thank God I am not where I used to be."—Joyce Meyer

"Faith is taking the first step, even when you don't see the whole staircase."—Martin Luther King Jr.

Motes:

"Christmas is a time to open our hearts to God and his gifts, just like the rest of the year."

-Unknown



"It is Christmas in the heart that puts Christmas in the air."

-W.T. Ellis



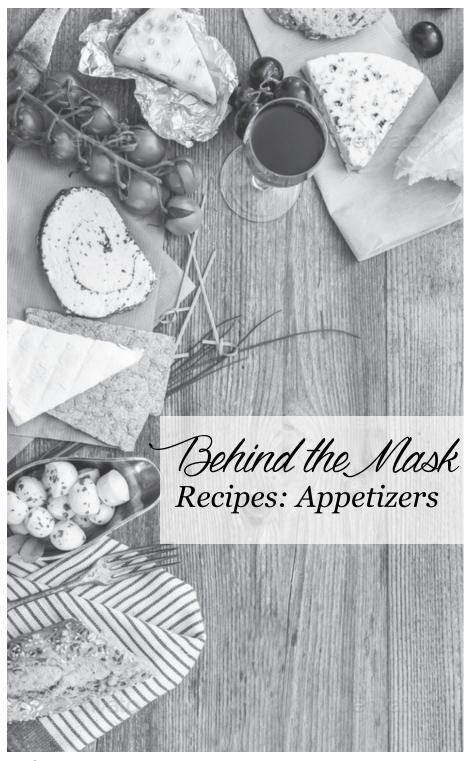
Merry Christmas

Happy New Year

*Be sure to download or order your 2017 Women's Planner

Behind the Mask Recipes





Behind the Mask Appetizers

Guacamole

Ingredients:

- 3 avocados peeled, pitted, and mashed
- 1 lime, juiced
- 1 Tablespoon salt
- 2 Roma tomatoes, diced
- 3 Tablespoons cilantro, chopped
- 1 green jalapeño pepper, diced (optional, to add spice)

Directions: In a medium deep bowl mash the avocados, then add the lime juice and salt. Once you reach the desired texture (you can make it chunky or smooth), add the rest of the ingredients. For best flavor, refrigerate no more than an hour or serve immediately. Serves 8.

Texas-Style Green Sauce Din

Ingredients:

- 4 ripe avocados
- 8 ounces Daisy sour cream
- 1 can Rotel, original
- 1/2 Tablespoon garlic powder
- 1 (4 ounce) can Ortega green chiles
- 2 teaspoons salt
- 1 teaspoon lemon juice
- 1½ ounces Philadelphia cream cheese

Directions: Put all ingredients in a blender and liquefy. Serve with your favorite chips!



Behind the Mask Appetizers

Hummus

Ingredients:

1 (16 ounce) can of chickpeas or garbanzo beans

1/4 cup liquid from chickpeas can 3-5 Tablespoons lemon juice (the juice of a lemon)

1/3 cup tahini (roasted sesame seed paste)

2 cloves garlic, crushed OR garlic salt

½ teaspoon salt

2 Tablespoons olive oil

Optional: 1/4 cup pine nuts, ground cumin

Directions: Drain chickpeas and set aside the liquid from the can. Combine the remaining ingredients in a blender or food processor. Add the ½ cup liquid from the can. Blend for 3-4 minutes on low until thoroughly mixed and smooth. Place in serving bowl and create a shallow well in the center. Add a dash of olive oil in the well.

Optional for serving hummus:

Garnish with a few shakes of ground cumin and toasted pine nuts. In a small skillet cook the pine nuts in 1 tablespoon olive oil over medium heat until light brown, stirring, about 4 minutes. Don't burn them!

Serve immediately with pita bread (fresh, warm, or toasted), raw celery and carrot sticks, tortilla chips,

or crackers. To make fresh pita chips: Cut the pita bread into thin triangles, brush with olive oil, and toast for 10 minutes in a 400-degree oven.

Spinach and Artichoke Din

Ingredients:

1 (10 ounce) box frozen spinach (cut or chopped), thawed

1 (12 ounce) jar artichoke hearts, drained and roughly chopped

1/2 cup whipped cream cheese 3/4 cup sour cream

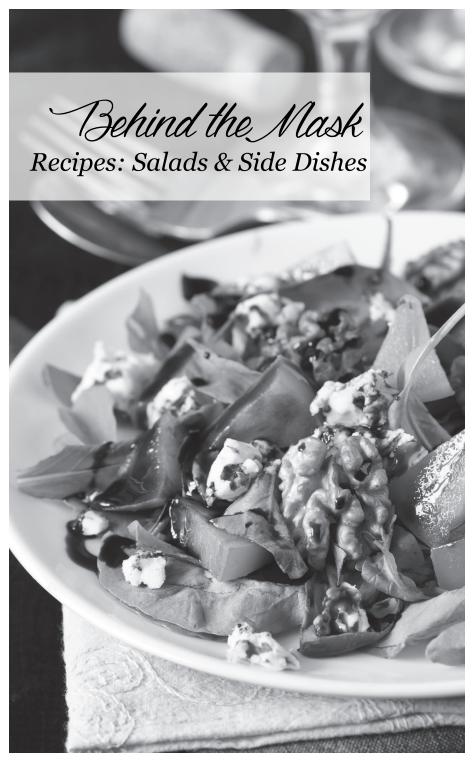
1 cup grated Cheddar cheese

1/2 teaspoon kosher salt 1/4 teaspoon black pepper

Pita chips, tortilla chips, or sliced French bread

1 lemon, cut into wedges
 (optional)

Directions: Heat oven to 400 degrees. Squeeze the spinach between paper towels to remove excess moisture. In a medium bowl, combine the spinach, artichokes, cream cheese, sour cream, and Cheddar cheese. Season with salt and pepper. Spoon the mixture into a small oven-safe baking dish. Bake until lightly golden and heated through, about 15 minutes. Serve warm with chips or bread and lemon.



Behind the Mask Salads & Side Dishes

Cabbage Salad

Ingredients: Dressing:

1 cup vinegar ½ cup honey ½ cup sugar ½ cup oil

1 teaspoon salt 1 teaspoon celery seed

Dash turmeric

Salad:

1 cabbage head, finely chopped 1 sweet pepper, finely chopped 1 onion, finely chopped

Directions: Combine all dressing ingredients in small sauce pan. Bring to a boil. Combine salad ingredients in a bowl. Pour hot dressing over salad. Do not stir until cool. Toss dressing and salad. Cover tightly and store in refrigerator. Keeps indefinitely.

Pice and Artichoke Salad

Ingredients:

1 box chicken-flavored Rice-A-Roni 1 jar marinated artichoke hearts 1/3 cup mayonnaise 1/4 teaspoon curry powder 4-6 green onions, chopped 1 (4 ounce) jar stuffed green olives, sliced

Directions: Prepare Rice-A-Roni according to package directions. Drain and chop artichokes, reserving the liquid. Mix all the ingredients (including reserved liquid from artichokes). Refrigerate until ready to serve. Can be prepared a day ahead! Serves 6.



Behind the Mask Salads & Side Dishes

Sweet Potato Casserole

Ingredients: Casserole:

3 cups cooked, mashed sweet potatoes (may use canned) ½ cup sugar 2 eggs, beaten 1 teaspoon vanilla

Topping:

1 cup coconut 1 cup chopped pecans 1 cup brown sugar 1/3 cup butter

Directions: Combine all casserole ingredients. Spoon into lightly greased casserole dish. Mix topping ingredients. Spread topping evenly over casserole. Bake at 375 degrees until topping is brown.

Cream Corn Casserole

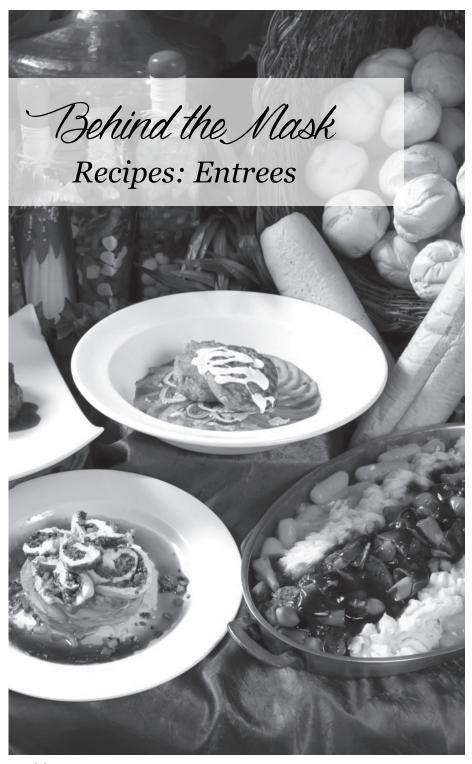
1 (8 ounce) package cream cheese

Ingredients:

at room temperature, cubed
4 Tablespoons butter
1/3 cup milk
1/2 teaspoon salt
Ground pepper to taste
1 (18 ounce) bag frozen corn,
thawed
Diced jalapeños to taste (optional)
1 cup shredded sharp Cheddar
cheese

Directions: Preheat oven to 350 degrees. In a medium pot, melt cream cheese and butter over low heat. Stir in milk until mixture is smooth and creamy. Stir in corn, jalapeños, salt, and pepper. Pour mixture into 8x8-inch square baking dish. Sprinkle with grated cheese. Bake for 20 minutes or until golden and bubbly.





Behind the Mask Entrees

Loaded Chicken & Potatoes

Ingredients:

1 pound boneless chicken breasts, cut in 1" cubes

6-8 medium skin-on red potatoes, cut in ½" cubes

1/3 cup olive oil

2 Tablespoons garlic powder

2 Tablespoons hot sauce (more if you like it HOT!)

1 Tablespoon paprika

11/2 teaspoons salt

1 teaspoon black pepper

Topping:

2 cups fiesta blend cheese 1 cup crumbled, cooked bacon 1 cup diced green onion

Directions: Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Spray a 9X13 baking dish with cooking spray. In a large bowl, mix together the olive oil, salt, pepper, paprika, garlic powder, and hot sauce. Add the cubed potatoes and chicken and stir to coat. Carefully scoop the potatoes and chicken into the prepared baking dish. Bake the potatoes and chicken for 55-60 minutes, stirring every 20 minutes until cooked through, crispy, and browned on

the outside. In the meantime, fry the bacon (about half a pound), drain, and crumble when cooled enough to handle.

Once the potatoes and chicken are fully cooked, remove from the oven. Then top with the cheese, bacon, and green onion. Return the casserole to the oven and bake for 5 minutes or until cheese is melted.

Crock Pot Ribs

Ingredients:

Boneless pork ribs

1 bottle barbecue sauce of
choice
Salt
Pepper

Directions: Season meat with salt and pepper. Place in crock pot and cover with 1 bottle of your favorite barbecue sauce. Cook for 8 hours and these ribs will melt in your mouth! *Couldn't be easier or better*.



Behind the Mask **Entrees**

Mexican Chicken Hautas

Ingredients:

16 corn tortillas 2 cups cooked and shredded chicken

Vegetable oil for frying 1 cup Mexican sour cream

1 cup salsa of your choice

1 head romaine lettuce, sliced

1 cup queso fresco (Mexican cheese), crumbled

Directions: In a deep skillet, preheat 1 inch deep of oil to 350 degrees, set over medium heat. (Or you can also test if the oil is ready for frying the flautas, by dipping a flauta or tortilla to see if the oil actively bubbles around it.) Place a dry skillet over medium heat until hot, and then heat the tortillas on the comal for about 30 seconds per side; this will prevent them from breaking when rolling them into flautas.

Place 1 to 2 tablespoons of shredded chicken on each tortilla and roll them tightly. They should be thin, not chubby rolls. You can insert wooden toothpicks through 2 to 3 flautas at a time, so they will fry evenly and hold their shape. Once the oil is hot, gently dip the flautas in it. Fry them until they have crisped and turned golden, about 2 to 3 minutes. Flip them over so they will brown evenly, for another minute. Remove the

flautas from the oil and put them on a plate or tray lined with paper towels.

Arrange flautas on a serving platter and garnish with lettuce, cheese, Mexican cream and salsa, or let your guests tailor to their taste. A great addition to this recipe is serving guacamole as a side or topping. Serves 8.

Nlock Quiche

Ingredients:

12 slices of crisply cooked bacon OR 1/2 regular and 1/2 hot sausage (as much as you like), browned

4 eggs

11/2 cups milk

1 cup shredded Swiss cheese

1 cup Bisquick

1/8 teaspoon salt

1/8 teaspoon pepper

Directions: Layer bacon (or sausage) and cheese in a greased pie plate. Beat the rest of the ingredients until smooth (may be done in blender). Pour over meat and cheese in pie plate. Bake at 400 degrees for 30-35 minutes (until knife inserted in center comes out clean). For an extra touch, garnish slices with tomatoes and lettuce.

Behind the Mask Entrees

Corn Flake Chicken

Season to taste with garlic

powder, salt, pepper

Ingredients:

6 skinless chicken breasts, rinsed and patted dry 2 cups crushed corn flakes 1 cup milk 1 cup sour cream

Directions: Place 1 cube of butter in a 9x13 pan and melt in oven. Combine milk and sour cream in a shallow bowl for dipping the chicken. Dip chicken breasts in the milk/sour cream mixture. Dip chicken breasts in crushed corn flakes on both sides and season.

NOTE: Just multiply this to make big batches. Always a hit!

Lay chicken in the melted butter.

or until temperature reaches

approximately 160 degrees.

Cook at 350 degrees for 50 minutes

Sunday Chicken

Ingredients:

8-10 boneless, skinless chicken breasts

Salt

Pepper

Garlic powder

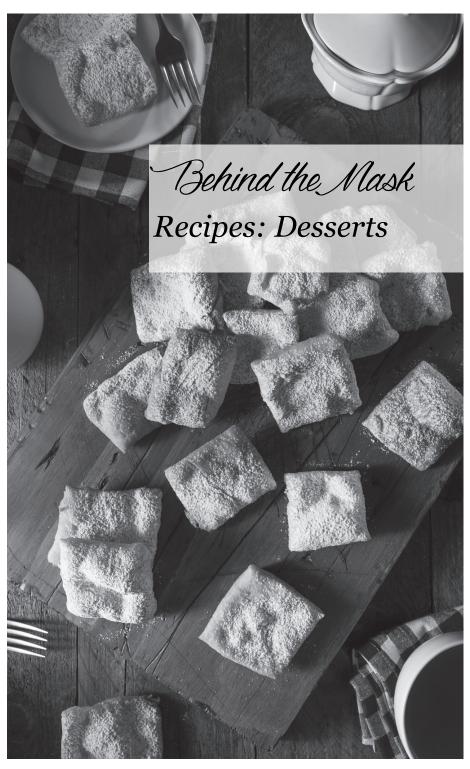
2 cups Russian salad dressing

2 small jars apricot preserves

2 packages Lipton onion soup (dry mix)

Directions: Preheat oven to 300 degrees. Spray 13x9x2 baking dish with cooking spray. Place chicken breasts in baking dish. Sprinkle with salt, pepper, and garlic powder. In a bowl combine the salad dressing, preserves, and soup mix. Pour over the chicken and bake (covered) for 2 hours. Serve over a bed of rice (or cooked noodles could be substituted). Garnish with pineapple slices or fresh sliced apricots if desired.





Behind the Mask Desserts

Tamous Chocolate Chin Cookies

Ingredients:

11/3 cups butter

1 cup brown sugar

1 cup sugar

2 eggs

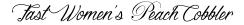
2 teaspoons vanilla

3 cups flour (heaping)

1 teaspoon baking soda

2 cups chocolate chips

Directions: Mix butter, sugars, eggs, and vanilla. Stir in remaining ingredients. Drop by tablespoonful onto ungreased cookie sheet and bake for 13 minutes at 375 degrees. Makes 3-4 dozen.



Ingredients:

Cake:

1 box yellow cake mix

1 can peaches

1 can crushed pineapple

2 Tablespoons lemon juice

1 Tablespoon cinnamon

1 Tablespoon nutmeg

Separate Bowl:

1 cup brown sugar 4 Tablespoons flour ½ teaspoon cinnamon ½ teaspoon nutmeg

Lemon Glaze:

1 cup powdered sugar2-3 Tablespoons fresh lemon juiceSliced walnuts (optional)

Directions: In a bowl, prepare the yellow cake mix batter according to package instructions. Add the tablespoons of cinnamon, nutmeg, and lemon juice to the cake batter. Pour the canned peaches (including juice) and crushed pineapple into a 9X13 greased pan. Pour the cake mix (with added ingredients) over the canned fruit. In a separate bowl, mix the brown sugar, flour, and 1/2 teaspoons of cinnamon and nutmeg. Sprinkle on top of the cake mix. Bake at 350 degrees for 1 hour.

While cobbler is baking prepare lemon glaze by combining the powdered sugar and fresh lemon juice. Drizzle over semi-cooled cake and sprinkle sliced walnuts on top if desired.

NOTE: When cooking for large groups this is such an easy dessert. Use the large aluminum, disposable pans and triple the recipe.

Behind the Mask Desserts

Mamaw's Strawberry Delight,

Ingredients:

1 package Oreo cookies, smashed
1 cube butter, melted
1 package fresh strawberries
32 ounces cream cheese
8 squares vanilla almond bark
1 cup sour cream

Directions: In a 9x13 cake pan add melted butter. Press the smashed Oreos into the pan. Layer the Oreos with sliced strawberries. In a bowl, beat the cream cheese 2 or 3 minutes. Add melted and cooled almond bark. Beat an additional 1 minute. Add sour cream and mix well. Spread the mixture on top of the Oreos.

Optional: Slice a few Oreos in half and place on top. Melt one additional almond bark square. Poke a tiny hole in a Ziploc bag and place the melted almond bark in the bag. Drizzle over the strawberries for a pretty presentation. Store dessert in the refrigerator. *Original recipe of Connie Nelson, mother of Brandy Harvey*.

Okie Cake

Ingredients: Cake:

2 cups flour 1 teaspoon salt 2 teaspoons baking soda 1½ cups sugar 2 eggs 1 teaspoon vanilla 1 can crushed pineapple

Icing:

1 cup sugar 2/3 cup canned milk 2/3 stick margarine Coconut

Directions: Mix cake ingredients in bowl, pour into cake pan, and bake at 350 degrees for 30 minutes. Mix icing ingredients together and boil for 2 minutes. Pour on cake. Sprinkle with coconut. Cook for 10 more minutes or until golden brown.

Behind the Mask Desserts

Peanut Butter Pie

Ingredients:

- 1 (8 ounce) package cream cheese 1½ cups confectioner's sugar
- 1 cup creamy peanut butter
- 1 cup milk
- 1 (16 ounce) container frozen whipped topping, thawed
- 2 (9 inch) graham cracker pie

Directions: Beat together the cream cheese and confectioner's sugar. Mix in the peanut butter and milk. Beat until smooth and fluffy. Gently fold in whipped topping. Spoon mixture into the pie crusts. Cover and refrigerate until firm (also freezes well).

Cream Cheese Banana Pudding

Ingredients:

- 4 cups cold milk
- 2 (3½ ounce) packages instant banana or vanilla pudding mix
- 1 (8 ounce) package cream cheese, softened
- 1/3 cup sugar
- 11/2 cups thawed Cool Whip
- 1 (12 ounce) box vanilla wafers
- 4 bananas, sliced

Directions: In a large bowl combine milk and pudding mix according to package directions. In a small bowl stir together cream cheese and sugar until smooth. Stir into pudding mixture and fold in Cool Whip. In a 13x9x2 inch baking dish layer half the vanilla wafers, half the bananas, and half the pudding mixture. Repeat layers. Chill and serve.





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