

Unmasked

FRIDAY, JULY 31, 2020



UNMASKED

We are living in a time when wearing masks is becoming part of our “new normal” as health authorities balance opening up public spaces while mitigating the risk of spreading the coronavirus. Perhaps like me, before you leave home on one of those essential trips, you complete a mental checklist that looks like this:

- Keys
- Phone
- Wallet
- **Mask**
- Hand Sanitizer

And if you are a mom of young kids, you’d probably have a few additional items to add to that list.

Recently, a friend commented to me about how she now triple-checks that she always has her mask. She also mentioned how she was wondering why people were not smiling back at her as she flashed them a lovely smile until it dawned on her that they were unable to see her smile behind her mask. Touché.

That got me thinking about another kind of mask - those **invisible masks** that many of us have been wearing for most of our lives. This type of mask-wearing is not unique to our time; Jesus addressed this issue several times during His earthly ministry and I’d like to take a look at one account in Luke’s gospel.

For our purposes, the Message paraphrase describes it beautifully: [Luke 12:1-3 \(MSG\)](#)

*By this time the crowd, unwieldy and stepping on each other's toes, numbered into the thousands. But Jesus' primary concern was his disciples. He said to them, "Watch yourselves carefully so you don't get contaminated with 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. (Emphasis Added)*

In this example, Jesus was talking about the ultra-religious Pharisees and the religious masks they wore, as they literally walked around in robes with tassels that showcased to the public how many religious laws they were "obeying". The fact is that they may have appeared a certain way on the outside, but they lived the exact opposite in reality.

Religious masks remain a big part of our society today, even though they may not take the form of tassel-lined robes. Today, it may take the shape of our perfect church attendance, involvement, connections, memory verse knowledge, and the like.

But that is only one type of mask. Masks come in many forms to hide various underlying conditions in our search to belong. We may feel inferior, not good enough, not a part



of the group, or a range of other things. I do believe that our Social-Media saturated age has amplified this perceived need to wear masks. It may mean that multiple masks become necessary for different audiences, risking a loss of our identity altogether. We may have one mask to conceal the loneliness that we experience, another to portray a certain type of success, and yet another to hide deep wounds that's causing us pain; the list could be endless. It can become exhausting to keep up with the different masks.

For a lot of my life, I became very skilled at wearing different masks - the religious mask around certain people, the success mask around others, and the "everything-is-fine" mask almost all the time. What I didn't know then, was how much those masks were preventing me from receiving all that God had in store for me – healing, growth, authenticity and joy. You see, masks inhibit others from getting to know the real us and keep us stuck in that fake state of existence which we are trying so hard to conceal.

Ladies, do not allow the world to deceive you into the trap of wearing invisible masks. Thankfully, if you've been putting on a mask, you can also choose to remove that mask. On your own, I know, that could seem like a daunting task, but I would encourage you to find a **trusted group of friends** who will lovingly walk with you through the process of unmasking and finding healing. [James 5:16](#) talks specifically about how we find healing when we confess our sins to each other and pray for each other. Like most churches these days, our church has

provided opportunities for you to do so in the safe environment of our [small groups](#) where you can build meaningful, godly relationships. God has always intended for us to build life in the context of community and I highly recommend that you connect with a small group.

It may be a long while before Public Health authorities remove the restriction of wearing masks in public; however, the benefit of halting the spread of the virus that has ravaged our world far outweighs the discomfort of wearing a mask, so I am happy to comply.

But when it comes to those **invisible masks**, this I know firsthand: the freedom that comes from removing them cannot be overstated against the debilitating risk of not doing so.

Blanca recorded this song, “Real Love” a few years ago and it seems to be a fitting song choice for this week. I urge you to reflect on the lyrics.

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