

Fearless Series - Transparency

Finding Joy in Being Real

Introduction

They are judged by this fact: The light has come into the world. But they did not want light. They wanted darkness, because they were doing evil things. [20] Everyone who does evil hates the light. They will not come to the light, because the light will show all the bad things they have done. [21] But anyone who follows the true way comes to the light. Then the light will show that whatever they have done was done through God.

John 3:19-21 ERV

Teacher's Note:

- *This Scripture compares being transparent with being in the light. When we don't want to be transparent about who we really are, we choose darkness and everything that comes with it. But when we choose to be honest and in the light, we are able to see the good things God does.*
- *Why do we not want to be transparent? (NIV translation says "for fear that their deeds will be exposed.")*

What is transparency?

Transparency is having thoughts, feelings, or motives that are easily perceived. It is being completely and honestly ourselves without any pretense. What you see is what you get.

Are you transparent?

Transparency is having thoughts, feelings, or motives that are easily perceived. It is being completely and honestly ourselves without any pretense.

- What fears come up when thinking about showing the real you?
- What are some ways you try to pretend to be someone you're not?

Your goal

What's an area of your life that you need God's help to be more transparent and honest about?

Why Be Transparent?

Count yourself lucky, how happy you must be— you get a fresh start, your slate's wiped clean. [2] Count yourself lucky— GOD holds nothing against you and you're holding nothing back from him. [3] When I kept it all inside, my bones turned to powder, my words became daylong groans. [4] The pressure never let up; all the juices of my life dried up. [5] Then I let it all out; I said, "I'll make a clean breast of my failures to GOD." Suddenly the pressure was gone— my guilt dissolved, my sin disappeared. [6] These things add up. Every one of us needs to pray; when all hell breaks loose and the dam bursts we'll be on high ground, untouched.

Psalm 32:1-6 MSG

- **Relieves Pressure**
 - When we keep it all inside and try to pretend to be something we are not, we get so pent up that the pressure to be someone we're not becomes too much to handle.
- **We are Happy Because We are Known**
 - When we hold nothing back - our failures, mistakes, dreams and passions - we can see that God accepts us for who we are. God knows our failures and loves us anyway!
- **How does pretending put pressure on you?**
 - What do you do to try to pretend to be someone you're not? How have you felt more pressure as a result?

Teacher's Note:

- *What fears come to mind when you think about being transparent (both past and current)? How have you pretended to be someone you were not and what did that look like? What did that feel like?*

Transparent with God

"Here's what I want you to do: Find a quiet, secluded place so you won't be tempted to role-play before God. Just be there as simply and honestly as you can manage. The focus will shift from you to God, and you will begin to sense his grace.

Matthew 6:6 MSG

- **Find Your Spot**
 - In order to be transparent with God, it starts by finding a place you can go to completely let down. It could be your backyard, a park, a trail, etc.
- **Be Real**
 - God doesn't want us to role-play or put on a performance for him. He wants us to be real with him. That could mean being angry and yelling at him, getting excited about something and talking his ear off, or being sad and crying with him. God doesn't care how it comes out, he just wants our true and honest selves.
- **What do you think it means to "sense God's grace"?**
 - Why do you think you sense his grace when you decide to be honest with him?

Teacher's Note:

- *Give some examples of how you have found your "spot" with God. When was a time you were completely and honestly yourself in prayer with God? What does it mean for you to begin to sense God's grace?*

Transparent with Friends

Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The earnest prayer of a righteous person has great power and produces wonderful results.

James 5:16 NLT

But if we are living in the light of God's presence, just as Christ does, then we have wonderful fellowship and joy with each other, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from every sin.

1 John 1:7 TLB

- **Honest Together**
 - The way we get to be close to our friends is by being honest with each other. The scriptures teach us that this is how we feel "completely healed," because we don't have to be held back by our guilt anymore.
- **Be Happy!**
 - The moment we decide to be totally honest with our friends, confessing our sins and being real about where we're at, is the moment we get to be completely happy because we are completely known!
- **What one or two friends do you want to start building a transparent friendship with?**
 - What can you be honest about with them to start building that closeness?

Teacher's Note:

- *What is friendship where you feel like you can be completely honest? How do you feel in that friendship? What do you talk about with them?*

Ron Swanson - *Parks and Recreation*

Out of everyone in the show, Ron Swanson was the most guarded and unwilling to be transparent or vulnerable. But once he decided to start opening up with his friend Leslie, he saw that transparency actually leads to connection and closeness with his friends.

- What friend do you want to be closer to? What can you be honest about with them to become closer?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yVjnidcT2ts>

In this clip, Ron finally decides to be honest about why he has been so mean to Leslie. He reveals that he misses her friendship. Because of his willingness to be transparent, he and Leslie become even closer than before.

Decision

Truth has no special time of its own. Its hour is now -- always.

Albert Schweitzer

- **Talk it through:** How do you need God to help you become completely transparent?
- **Take action:** What is one thing you can be honest about with God and friends to start becoming more honest and transparent?
 - *Teacher's Note: Walk through step by step what it would take to change. The leader should think through some of this ahead of time. Be as detailed as possible.*
 - *What steps will this decision involve?*
 - *When will you do them?*
 - *Possible pitfalls?*
 - *Who will you ask to help hold you accountable?*

Next steps

This section is meant to be done together over the next 1-2 weeks. Set up times to do some of these together or to do them separately and then talk about what you learned.

- **Read together:** 1 John ERV, Psalm 32 TPT, Psalm 51 MSG - What kind of person can you become when you decide to be honest?
- **Watch together:** *Parks and Rec* Season 7, episode 4: "Leslie and Ron", and "Fake ID" on Deep Spirituality's Youtube Channel
- **Do together:** Come up with a list of five things you can pray and be honest about at your "spot" with God everyday (family, insecurities, etc.).

Further study

- Psalm 51:16-17 MSG
- John 8:31-32 NLT
- 1 Thessalonians 1:5 TPT
- 2 Corinthians 6:11-12 NLT
- Matthew 5:14-16 MSG

