

What do you think he means by that? Do you agree or not?

Long before psychologists have spoken on the benefit of self-disclosure, the Bible has encouraged the faithful to confess to God and to one another. Authenticity is a Christian imperative. God can only forgive and take away those unpleasant parts of our lives which we would acknowledge and confess.

OPEN UP

How much do people really know about you? Do you think they know you enough to say that they really love you in spite of those? Have you been living in darkness all these times, fearful that people will see the real you and reject you?

What are the things that are preventing you from reaching out more and reveal yourself to people close to you? Share on these things.

WORK OUT

Think about a person you need to communicate more of yourself in order to develop a closer and a stronger relationship. Make a commitment that you will start doing it within the week.

UNAFRAID

Session Objective: To emphasize the value of opening up and communicating oneself

GET STARTED

Share a one personal information or characteristic that people do not think you have.

REFLECT

1. A Hermit Crab Existence

The hermit crab is an interesting creature. To begin with, hermit crabs are not really crabs. They are more like lobsters. One interesting fact about hermit crabs is that, unlike the real crabs, they don't have their own shells. They just scout for abandoned ones. That's how they got their name, like hermits who do not build their own home but just use any cave they find.

The problem is, the crabs keep on growing but the shells do not. Here comes the most challenging part of the hermit crab's life—getting out of the small confines of its protective shell to seek a bigger one. It is a risky task for out of the shell they are an easy prey. There is not really much option though, remaining in the old shell, some crabs stopped growing, while others that keep their outgrown shells cease to be properly protected, they turn out to be easy prey as well.

Turning our attention to humans, what are the "protective shells" that people have to get out from in order to grow as a person?

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2. The Prison of self-confinement

- a. *When I kept silence, my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long. For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me: my moisture is turned into the drought of summer.* Psalm 32: 3-4
- b. People build a wall around them for protection. They labor so hard to build strong and thick only to realize that the very same wall that is supposed to protect becomes the very wall that imprisons and isolates them.
- c. *The defensive person cannot be a growing person because his world is no bigger than himself and the circle of his horizons is closed.* —John Powell
- d. *“Every maladjusted person is a person who has not made himself known to another human being, and in consequence does not know himself. Nor can he be himself.* --Sidney S Jourard
- e. Loneliness is a more manifested phenomenon today than ever before. In a society that promotes individualism and is fast paced, people can become isolated and detached even at the midst of a bustling crowd. Loneliness results when a person is unable to meaningfully connect with others, when he feels no one knows us, and nobody cares.

3. “Sound of Silence” a song by Simon and Garfunkel

*And in the naked light I saw
 Ten thousand people, maybe more
 People talking without speaking
 People hearing without listening
 People writing songs that voices never share
 And no one dared
 Disturb the sound of silence*

Reflect on what does the stanza mean, particularly the line that goes “people talking without speaking?” In what way can people talk but not really communicate?

4. The freedom of self-disclosure

- a. Growth takes risk. As it is in business, contest, or any endeavor, so it is in our personal growth. We must risk opening and reaching out to others because the only alternative is that of loneliness and despair.
- b. When we communicate ourselves, we narrow the gap that exists between us. It is an invitation for the other person to do the same, to let go the pretensions and be authentic.
- f. When we open up ourselves—our issues, problems, burdens, our joys and our true selves— it is not only other people who come to know us better, we also get to know ourselves more.
- g. What do we really lose when we open up? The narrow confines off ourselves and ego, and the safety of our prison, and a mask that does not fit and aches unceasingly.
- h. A research from Harvard University found out that talking about oneself triggers the release of dopamine, the chemical that control the brain’s reward and pleasure system associated with the pleasure during sex, cocaine use, and eating sweet and flavorful food. The conclusion: talking about oneself is inherently pleasurable. The only question that remains is what are the things that we are telling about ourselves? Are they the truth?

5. “Why Am I Afraid To Tell You Who Am I?”

- a. In spite of the fact that the only thing that awaits a person who does not open up himself is loneliness and despair, why would they still be afraid to reach out to others and reveal themselves?

- b. John Powell, in his book ““Why Am I Afraid To Tell You Who Am I?” explores the reason why people do not reveal their true selves and instead keep a pretentious one. He simply summed up the reason in these words:

“Why am afraid to tell you who I am, because, if I tell you who I am, you may not like who I am, and it's all that I have.”