

‘Reel to Real’—*Being Authentic*

September 26, 2013

We hear it a lot: I want the ‘real’ thing; I just want people to be ‘real.’ Get ‘real’! *Webster* defines *real* as fixed or immovable (real estate). The dictionary goes on to say that *real* is not artificial, but genuine—***authentic!*** And it defines *authentic* by suggesting three things it is not: **It is not imaginary; it is not false, and it is not an imitation.** It is real—*true!*

When we’re talking about a *real* person, the only One who is fixed and immovable, of course, is God! And he is the only person who is completely *authentic*: true. So what does it mean for us to be *real*, and how do we know if we are **not** just **1) acting-out** as on a r-e-e-l of film—**make-believe—2) an imitation**, as plastic fruit or a gold statue, or **3) false**. Who is the ‘real and authentic’ us? Can we know? Can we really be *real*? The best way to identify what is false would be to know what is *real*, and we need to know.

We read and study about our personalities formed as young as age two—the extraverted sanguine and choleric, and the introverted melancholic and phlegmatic and all of the combinations of the four personality types. Then there are the Type As and the Type Bs and all the following factors that go into making up who we really are:

- Our place in the family—birth order;
- Our childhood experiences—highlights and abuses;
- Our life-defining moments and life strategies;
- Our appearance, talents, abilities and resources;
- Our culture, race, background and heritage;
- Limitations such as illness, handicap or learning disability;
- Our education or lack of it;
- Our affirmation by parents, teachers, peers or lack of it; and
- Our exposure to propriety, morals, manners or lack of...etceteras.

All this information is overwhelming to absorb! And though it may be good to know and even fun to put together a profile of ourselves, it is never a place to camp out—not a box to put ourselves in. It’s never an excuse for us to say: “That’s just the way that I am!” Or worse yet: “God made me this way.” While being *real* may appear to be just being what the books, tests, counselors and profilers say we are, that is not what being *real* is about. It’s something actually smaller—in a place where only God can go—in the inward parts.

The Psalmist says in 51:6 “Surely you desire **truth in the inner parts**; you teach me **wisdom in the inmost place**.” God knows the *real* us! And he desires us to be *real* (truth) in the inner parts, and he teaches us wisdom (to know truth) in the inmost place. And since God created us, it makes sense to check with Him as to who (and *whose*) we **really** are!

I. God says that we are created in his image (Genesis 1:27).

- God knows us before we’re formed in the womb (Jeremiah 1:5).
- God knows we are made of one rib and some dust (Genesis 2:7, 22).
- God knows our inner parts and our inmost place (Psalm 51:6).
- God knows the plans he has for us (Jeremiah 29:11).
- God knows the number of hairs on our head (Matthew 10:30), and the number of days in our lives.
- God has engraved our names on the palms of his hand (Isaiah 49:16).
- God is doing a work in us that he will finish (Philippians 1:6).
- God has a certain place for us to live (Acts 17:26-27).
- God is preparing a home for us: an inheritance (Matthew 25:34).
- God will come for us!

God is vitally interested in revealing the *real* us; he wants us to know the truth about ourselves. And God will reveal that to us in his Word. Again, *real* is fixed, immovable and not artificial, but genuine and authentic—the bottom line is that *real* is what is **true, truthful—the truth**.

We need to really (truly) want to know, and to benefit by what Scripture tells us about ourselves. So being real with God is first: Proverbs 27:19 “*As water reflects a face, so a man’s heart reflects the man.*” *Real* is truth and Truth is a person (John 14:6). Jesus says, “*I am the way, the truth and the life...*” Jesus is ‘real.’ When the world says ‘get real,’ God wants that to mean ‘get Jesus!’ John 8:32 “*Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.*” If we question whether *real* is truth, when someone says “I really love you,” they are saying “I truly love you”.

II. God created us to be women; He did not make a mistake. It’s a question of whose press we are going to believe about who we really are. Who will be the authority of *authentic* in our lives: God and His Word, or Satan and his lies? Elisabeth Elliot in *Let Me Be a Woman*, says, “We are called to be women. The fact that I am a woman does not make me a different kind of Christian, but the fact that I am a Christian does make me a different kind of woman. For I have accepted God’s idea of me, and my whole life is an offering back to Him of all that I am and all that he wants me to be.”

III. God the Holy Spirit is absolutely committed to conforming believers to the image of the Lord Jesus Christ—conforming us to the Truth, His Truth—making us 'real' people. Philippians 1:6 “...*being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.*” Someone has said: Whom the Lord loveth He bugeth!

First, though, Galatians 6:3 says “*If anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he deceives himself.*” Our efficiency without Christ’s sufficiency is only deficiency, so we’ve absolutely got to be ‘real’ to come to Christ. I love the song *Just As I Am*, because coming to God just as we are is being *real*, with all of ourselves, our faults, our vices, our sinful nature and laying all before the Lord Jesus Christ. He will transform us and make us ‘real’.

♥Jesus *had to go through Samaria* John 4:4 says! He had an appointment with a woman. He went to Samaria to Jacob’s well to change her life—to make her *real* and give her Truth—Himself. He never called her by name; he could have—he knew her name—but Jesus is a gentleman. How do we know that the woman was *real*? When we finish reading the account in Scripture, we’ll know the following six truths—‘real things’ about her:

- 1) **She kept her appointment**—12 noon everyday at the water-well—so she wouldn’t offend propriety. She wouldn’t be welcome at the cool of day when the other women would gather.
- 2) **She knew it was highly unusual for a man to legitimately talk to her openly in daylight**—especially a Galilean, Judean, Jewish man talking with a half-Jewish, Samaritan woman. But Jesus had a longer recorded talk with her than anyone else in the Bible.
- 3) **She knew what she believed** and was able to articulate her beliefs—she knew the appropriate place the Jews said to worship, that Messiah was coming, and that he would have all the answers with him when he came. And she used this knowledge to change the subject when she became uncomfortable....
- 4) **She knew who she was** and what others thought about her and her people: (a culturally unacceptable woman with a checkered past as well as present—belonging to a hated half-breed people group).
- 5) **And she came to recognize the ‘real’ person in Jesus** as he shared the Gospel with her—the way, the truth and the life!
- 6) **And even when she exaggerated her claim**—“*he told me everything I ever did*”—it revealed the impression Jesus had made on her and her eagerness to share the truth with others. She was testifying to the fact that she was absolutely convinced that Jesus knew everything about her—absolutely everything.

And she was convincing! Many came to Christ because of her testimony—the Holy Spirit spoke through her, making her *real*—*authenticating* her witness. She wasn't interested in promoting herself, she exalted Jesus. And when we want people to see how great God is and not how great we are, then great things can happen! We're the windows through which the glory of Jesus should shine; be there and be *real*! The Samaritan woman was there and she was *real*. John 4:4-42 (speaking of Jesus in verse 4):

“Now he had to go through Samaria. So he came to a town in Samaria called Sychar, near the plot of ground Jacob had given to his son Joseph. Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired as he was from the journey, sat down by the well. It was about the sixth hour (12 noon). When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, ‘Will you give me a drink?’ (His disciples had gone into town to buy food.)

1. ***“The Samaritan woman said to him, ‘You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?’ (For Jews do not associate with Samaritans.)***
 - *“Jesus answered her, ‘If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water.’*
2. ***“‘Sir,’ the woman said, ‘you have nothing to draw with and the well is deep. Where can you get this living water? Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did also his sons and his flocks and herds?’***
 - *“Jesus answered, ‘Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.’*
3. ***“The woman said to him, ‘Sir, give me this water so that I won't get thirsty and have to keep coming here to draw water.’***
 - *“He told her, ‘Go, call your husband and come back.’*
4. ***“‘I have no husband,’ she replied.***
 - *“Jesus said to her, ‘You are right when you say you have no husband. The fact is, you have had five husbands, and the man you now have is not your husband. What you have just said is quite true (quite ‘real’).’*
5. (She changes the subject): ***“‘Sir,’ the woman said, ‘I can see that you are a prophet. Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, but you Jews claim that the place where we must worship is in Jerusalem.’***
 - **The indictment:** *“You Samaritans worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews. Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true (real) worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth.”*
6. ***“The woman said, ‘I know that Messiah (called Christ) is coming. When he comes, he will explain everything to us.’***

- “Then Jesus declared, ‘I who speak to you am he.’ Just then his disciples returned and were surprised to find him talking with a woman. But no one asked, ‘What do you want?’ or ‘Why are you talking with her?’

7. The witness: “Then, leaving her water jar, the woman went back to the town and said to the people, ‘Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Christ?’ They came out of the town and made their way toward him.

- **(Time out while Jesus discipled the disciples):** “Meanwhile his disciples urged him, ‘Rabbi, eat something.’ But he said to them, ‘I have food to eat that you know nothing about.’ Then his disciples said to each other, ‘Could someone have brought him food?’ ‘My food,’ said Jesus, ‘is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work. Do you not say, “Four months more and then the harvest”? I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest, **Even now the reaper draws his wages, even now he harvests the crop for eternal life, so that the sower and the reaper may be glad together.** Thus the saying “One sows and another reaps” is true (real). I sent you to reap what you have not worked for. Others have done the hard work, and you have reaped the benefits of their labor.’

“**Many of the Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman’s testimony.** ‘He told me everything I ever did.’ So when the Samaritans came to him, they urged him to stay with them, and he stayed two days. And because of his words many more became believers.

“They said to the woman, ‘We no longer believe just because of what you said; now we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this man **really** is the Savior of the world.’”

Here was a woman not very well thought of by society. Here was a woman who, up to this point, had not much to say, and may not have been heard if she had. Here was a woman who may not have been a speaker of any kind—a woman who had little passion, except maybe for men. But meeting the God/man Jesus changed her inside out! He placed his truth in her and made her *real*, and the Holy Spirit *authenticated* her person and her words. And many came to know the Christ through her testimony!

Do we know that our identity can only be **realized** in Christ? Do we who believe in Jesus know that we are children of God—that God is our Father? Do we know that Jesus is our older brother, and every true (*real*) believer is our brother/sister, and that Heaven is our home? We need to rehearse it, and ask that God would enable us to live as women who know who—and whose—we really, truly are!