

Why Does God Use Disguises?



God's Disguises (Part 1)
by Derek Prince

It's good to be with you again at the beginning of a new week sharing with you keys to successful living that God has placed in my hand through many years of personal experience and Christian ministry.

The title I've chosen for my talks this week may surprise you: "God's Disguises." Why should God use disguises? Well, that's one of the things I'll be explaining in my talks this week.

But first, let me say thank you to those of you who've been writing to me. Before I finish this talk, we'll be giving you a mailing address to which you may write. It encourages me greatly to hear how this radio ministry of mine has been helping you and blessing you. So, please take time to write to me—even if it's only a brief note.

Now, let's look into this question of God's disguises. Why should God ever want to use disguises? Surely he would be the last person to do such a thing.

Well, the principle that God sometimes uses concealment is stated in various places in Scripture. Particularly, there's a thought provoking verse in Proverbs 25:2:

> "It is the glory to God to conceal a matter; to search out a matter is the glory of kings."

So, we see that it rests with God to conceal and with kings to search out.

Now, "kings" stand in a certain way for the highest level of humanity. And so, one of the highest achievements of humanity on it's highest level is to search out what God has concealed. Perhaps you could say that that's what we'll be doing together in my talks this week. We'll be searching out some of the things that God has concealed.

Well, why does God conceal things? Or, more specifically, why does God use disguises? Why does He come to us in a form that has to be searched out? Let me say, first of all, that there are three things that God does not want to do when He comes to you and me. Number one, He does not want to

overawe us with His power. He does not want us to receive Him merely because He's all powerful. And, if we don't receive Him He could crush us in an instant—take away our breath and end our life. That's not a motive that's pleasing to God for us to receive Him.

Secondly, God does not want to entice us with his blessings. God is able to bless us in every area of our lives. He is able to give us all we need and much more. He's able to heal us, he's able to provide us with financial abundance, he's able to solve all of our problems. But, he doesn't want us to receive him merely on the basis of what we get from him. He doesn't want to entice us with his blessings.

Thirdly, God does not want to satisfy mere intellectual curiosity. For some people, life or the universe is like a jigsaw puzzle made up of many different pieces. And one of those pieces is labeled God. And some people just want to be able to put God in the right place in the puzzle. Well, God isn't really just a piece in the puzzle. And if we have that attitude towards him he won't reveal himself to us.

I've heard people say things like, "If I can put God in a test tube, I'll believe in him." To me, that's ridiculous! Any god that can be put in a test tube isn't a god worth believing in. So, let me just restate those three things that God does not want to do when he comes to us. He does not want to overawe us with his power, he does not want to entice us with his blessings, he does not want to satisfy mere intellectual curiosity.

Well then, what does God want? I think we can put it this way. God wants that we desire God for himself, apart from his power or his blessings or any other benefit. You see, God doesn't look at us as we look at one another. God looks right down into the innermost depths of our heart. There's a verse in 1 Samuel 16:7 that says this so clearly and vividly. The prophet Samuel had been sent to the house of Jesse to anoint one of Jesse's sons to be the next king of Israel. And Jesse produced seven fine, upstanding, handsome, young men and presented them to Samuel and said, "Which is to be the king?" Samuel was impressed by every one of them, but every time he was impressed by the outward appearance God said, "That isn't the one." So, they had run through all the sons that Jesse had presented and still there wasn't a king. And Samuel said, "Isn't there anyone else?" And Jesse said rather reluctantly, "There's one more, but he's out in the pastures looking after the sheep." Well that eighth son, the one that they didn't bother much with, was David, the future king of Israel. And when he came in the Lord said, "This is the one. Anoint him." But this is what the Lord said to Samuel:

> "But the Lord said to Samuel, 'Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him [that was of each of the previous sons]. The Lord does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.'"

So, God doesn't look at our outward appearance. He looks at our heart. And at the same time he doesn't want us to go merely by outward appearance or outward external things when we receive God. God wants us to receive him for himself without these tremendous attributes of power or riches or wisdom. Somehow in his tremendous humility God doesn't want to be wanted for things, he wants to be wanted for himself. And he arranges situations and circumstances in the lives of every one of us that sooner or later will put us to the test. Are we seeking God, are we believing in God because of what we get or because of God himself?

Now, what are the things that God looks for in our hearts? I'm going to read you three passages from the Old Testament, two from the book of Psalms and one from the prophet Isaiah. I believe these state very clearly and consistently what God really looks for. Psalm 34:18:

> "The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit."

An alternative reading for "crushed in spirit" is "contrite." Actually, by its root in Latin, contrite means just that, somebody who's been crushed, who's been rubbed down, who's kind of broken. I think we use the word "broken" in modern speech just in the same way.

So, God is looking for those who are broken, crushed. Isn't that strange? And then, in Psalm 138:6:

> "Though the Lord is on high, he looks upon the lowly, but the proud he knows from afar."

So, God is looking for the lowly. It also says "He knows the proud from afar." And if you ask my opinion, that's where he keeps them, afar off. Proud people really don't have access to God.

And then in Isaiah 57:15 there's a most beautiful verse that describes God's eternal glory and majesty.

> "For this is what the high and lofty one says—He who lives forever… [Another translation says 'he who inhabits eternity.'] …whose name is holy: I live in a high and holy place… [Isn't that awesome and impressive?

> But then it goes on to say:] '...but also with him who is contrite and lowly in spirit, to revive the spirit of the lowly and revive the heart of the contrite.'"

So, God is so high and majestic and inhabits eternity and though that's his dwelling place he has one other dwelling place of his choice. He says, "I live also with him who is contrite and lowly in spirit." So, what is God looking for? The contrite and the lowly, those who are not proud, not arrogant, not self-confident, not self-reliant—those in many cases who've passed through some kind of experience in life that has stripped them of self-confidence and arrogance and left them in the true meaning of the word, broken. That's what God is looking for, the lowly, the contrite, the broken.

Contrite means that we're genuinely sorry for wrongdoing. You see, lots of people do wrong an then suffer unpleasant consequences and they want to get out of the consequences but they're not really sorry for the wrongdoing. Well, God doesn't really want to entertain those people. He wants to entertain the people who not merely want to get out of the consequences but are sorry for the wrongdoing that brought them to those consequences. And so, God comes to us in disguises. He comes to us in such a way that if we are not sensitive and if we're not looking for what God is in his innermost nature, if we're just concerned with externals or our own selfish ends and purposes and desires, we'll miss him. That's why God comes to humanity in disguises. And, it's so important that we learn to recognize those disguises. Otherwise, God may come to us and we may miss him.

Now, in the remainder of my talks this week I'm going to describe to you some of God's disguises. But our time is up for today. Remember, I'll be back with you again tomorrow at this time.

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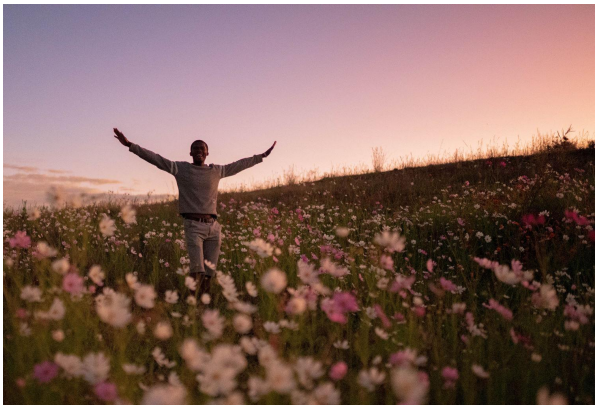

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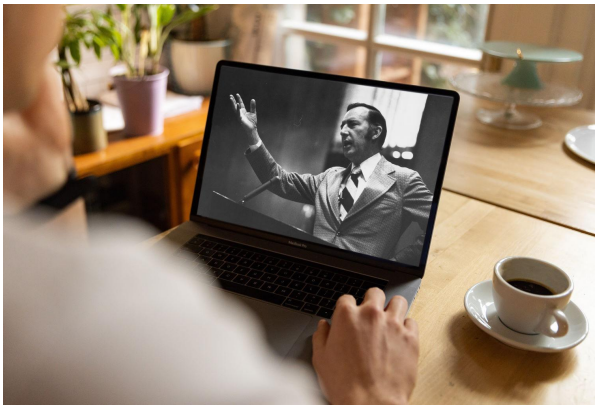

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