



# MASQUERADE

Experience Life. For Real.

**Discussion Notes October 3, 2010**

## **Masquerade Series – Part 1: Behind the Mask**

### **Review it**

A lot of us are living two lives and we have a face for each of them: outwardly we display our got-it-together face, which masks an inner private life that's often filled with pain. In this series we'll learn to stop the masquerade and get help, the help that comes when we're honest and vulnerable with our loving, healing God.

### **Discuss it**

1. [Read 2 Cor. 4:2 Aloud in a few different versions] For the duration of this series (and preferably for the entire duration of the Small Group) discuss Paul's declaration as it applies to your group. Are you willing to commit to each other that you will not "wear masks or play games? This agreed-upon authenticity and trust is necessary to receive the healing God means to give us in these groups.
2. Consider the five reactions to conflict that Pastor Chris described. Take turns describing situations where you each addressed conflict by dominating the other person, ignoring the problem, whining, surrendering, or ending the relationship/walking away from the source of conflict. Were these solutions effective? Why or why not?
3. Name a time when you believed that the "grass would be greener on the other side" and so you left the source of conflict to pursue a different friend/job/living situation/activity/boss etc. only to find that, as Pastor Chris said, "the water bill was higher." What did that look like in your life?
4. In our culture, we tend to believe we have the right to "have it our way" that we're entitled to own the home of our dreams, eat till we're full, play with the latest electronics, work in a job that pays great and makes us happy. Describe your own experience having such beliefs, and the resulting disappointments. How did you learn that God did not mean for earth and other people to satisfy all our desires?

5. Share a recent experience when you yelled at a driver, kicked the dog, sent a mean e-mail, or stormed down the hall as a first response to conflict. Then describe a similar situation when you decided to talk to God *first*. What were the consequences of each set of actions?

### **Think on It**

[Read 1 Peter 1: 6-7] Meditate on the fact that God allows conflict into our life to grow us and develop our character. But if we stubbornly refuse to learn what God is lovingly teaching us, we're choosing to repeat the lesson again and again. How does this principle apply to your life? Do you need to humbly submit to God's refining fire and allow Him to refine and shape and mold you?

### **Act on It**

Recall a recent conflict that you "won" by whining, overpowering, surrendering, ignoring or ending the relationship. In what ways did you really win, and how is the conflict still unresolved in your heart? If you now need to apologize for wrong actions or attitudes, humbly ask the Holy Spirit to soften your heart, reveal you own sin, and make amends as soon as possible.