

GLIMPSE

Hands and Faces

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A natural physical response to making a mistake or in other ways looking foolish or humiliated is to cover our countenance with our hands. This would literally be a "face-saving" device. Shame is losing face or in some way not facing ones truth. We can encourage someone else to "face the music" or "face the facts". Shame has something to do with not wanting to be who we are in certain human experiences. We would wish we were somewhere else at that moment. So we hide our faces from seeing and being seen by other faces. Now an enjoyable conversation can be the sharing of embarrassing things of our pasts which were hard to face back then. They can bring smiles and laughs and much mutual recognition and sharing of similar or exact experiences. "I forgot my lines in my grade-three play." "I emailed a love-note to my wife, but miss-emailed it to a business acquaintance." "I wet my pants during my First Communion." Saying the wrong thing, doing the wrong thing, being out of line, being awkward or unusual, these can be shaming things which can take time to reface.

There is the term, "Toxic-Shame" which has something to do with not merely covering our face, but covering a self which is so full of shame that not just the face, but the whole real self disappears. The self is re-personed so the real can hide. The "persona" can be shy, bold, bossy, crude, prissy, and goofy or any combinations of prevention. Toxic-Shame results from an over-generalization wherein one mistake un-creates the good-real into the ashamed un-real. "I did this and now I am a that." This is sad, but what is sadder is that the real person, who thinks he/she is hiding, really is seen within or behind the "persona". What is sad also is that the hiding-hider insults those close-byers. The hider assumes that no other person could accept and relate with the real me. They do not want to risk being known, so they do not show their face.

When we were younger we loved playing Hide-and-Seek, but as we get older we do not enjoy playing the seeker in the hider's game and so the toxicity interferes with healthy relationships. If I play your game, I catch your sickness and you insult me by believing I cannot relate with you in a healthy manner. We usually and with some compassion, do not confront the shame-player, but withdraw from the game-place. In the game, when the seeker couldn't find the hidiers, he/she would call out in a loud and defeated voice, "Alli alli oxen-free, if you don't come you'll be I-T!" "Real,

healthy friends say that to a shamed-one. "Come out, you are not bad, ugly, rejectable no matter what you did. Come out and stay out!"

Jesus went around honoring people instead of shaming them. His healing of eyes was an asking of this one to see the self as He does. The crippled, deaf, leper, tax-collector were all seen as unrelational, unsociable, because they were defined shamefully by an adjective, a physical condition. Others had told them to be ashamed. Jesus related with them, not through their adjective, but as nouns, persons, real creations of God. In various words of healing He said, "Take your hands away from your face!" When we hear Him say those words to us, to put those hands prayerfully together it is actually a "Faith-Saving" device. It is only a glimpse, face it.