

## Decent Exposure

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Exposure is the experience of or contact with something. It could be a physical element or a social association. It is usually not a friendly term. Exposure is often used to articulate something bad or excessive such as radiation exposure, over or under-exposure, or even indecent exposure (something lewd, immodest, or criminal).

But we want to consider a positive side of exposure: DECENT EXPOSURE. Exposure is not always bad. We may, for instance, expose ourselves or someone to something as part of a good learning experience. Decent, or proper, exposure of ourselves is one key to the Christian walk.

In David's classic **Psalms 19**, he pleads for the Lord to "*Cleanse me from secret faults. Keep back Your servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me.*" David needed help from God to bring to light (expose) areas he needed to correct. Of all our human gifts, "correct-ability" is one of very great value. Sometimes, it requires swallowing our pride, but it opens the way to better things we aspire to.

Again in **Psalms 139:23-24**, David asks for the Lord's help in exposing hidden faults: "*Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my anxieties; and see if there is any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.*" All of us, like David, need help seeing our own shortcomings. How willing we are to be helped in this is one indicator of our Christian maturity and desire to be more God-like.

**Jeremiah 17:9** warns us not to trust our own hearts: "*The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?*" The hardest person for us to see accurately is often ourselves.

Exposing our hearts to ourselves or others takes both honesty and courage. Often we fill our lives with distractions and busyness to avoid honest self-evaluations. Yet Paul urges us to examine ourselves (see **2 Corinthians 13:5**). Without honesty to truly evaluate where our faults and weaknesses are, we will not have or accept the information we need to change. Absolute honesty is essential for salvation. And without courage, we will not have the strength and resolve to change. Slowing down to take time to truly evaluate ourselves and accept evaluation from others is essential.

There are several ways that decent or godly exposure can take place in the Christian life. God can provide it as David requested. Each of us, with God's Holy Word, can have our lives and faults exposed as well as identifying our strengths.

We can also be exposed by our conscience. If we allow our conscience to be properly trained by God's guidance, it can expose our sinful actions as it troubles us. Our conscience will not tell us right from wrong; only God can do that. But if we align our conscience with God's will, it will tell us if our actions are in accordance with His will. And our conscience will give us decent exposure to things we need to correct.

Also, we can be decently exposed by and with our fellow Christians. **James 5:16** tells us, "*Confess your faults to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.*" Our willingness to develop ties with our brethren and open up, share, and expose ourselves to one another can be a great resource in our Christian walk. Picking one another up – or being picked up – is a valued work of fellowship (see **Galatians 6:1**). Unfortunately, we are so intent sometimes on covering our weaknesses that sharing and exposing ourselves is avoided.

Photographers know the importance of proper exposure in their craft, letting in the proper light to see the subject accurately. Likewise, Christians need the proper exposure and the light God provides in their self-examinations.

Even a small splinter can be painful to remove. Yet the sooner it is removed, the quicker the healing. The sore must be lanced for healing to begin. The cut must be made for the heart to be repaired. So it is with our faults. The sooner they are confessed and corrected, the quicker the healing and growth.

The Christian walk is constantly about restoration. We all tend to degrade from our bright conversion state. It takes constant attention to stay on the path to Heaven. The fallacy of “once saved, always saved” is that we are tempted to put ourselves on autopilot for the rest of our lives. And that is simply not God’s will or teaching. But **Psalm 23:3** says He will restore our soul.

David wisely wrote,

*Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me away from Your presence, and do not take Your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of Your salvation, and uphold me by Your generous Spirit (Psalm 51:10-12).*

The Christian walk is one of repeated restoration. It takes many returns to the Lord to stay on the path that leads to heaven. Since there is no avoiding the process of degradation, we must take measures to correct it when we see that it has occurred. And that seeing requires that we expose ourselves to reality and the truth. Fortunately, God, His Word, a properly trained conscience, and our brothers and sisters in the Lord, have been given to us to help us see ourselves as we are so that we can become what we need to be.

There is an old adage that most of us would rather be ruined by praise than helped by criticism. But it is help that we most often need. Help in seeing ourselves as we truly are and, therefore, seeing what we need to do to become more like Him. And that requires exposure — “decent exposure.”

There are many harmful things we can be exposed to, but there are also decent and needful exposures. We all need exposure of our true beings so that correction and restoration can occur.

The wise know that they will make mistakes. But they also know that a great blessing lies in their ability and willingness to correct those mistakes and to therefore become better servants of God.

May God give us the honesty and courage to “decently expose” ourselves to His and our fellow Christian’s watchful guidance and become more like Him each day.