



Links Players

On Being Authentic

For if I do wish to boast, I will not be foolish, for I will be speaking the truth, but I refrain from this so that no one will credit me with more than he sees in me or hears from me. (2 Corinthians 12:6, NASB)

One of my attorney friends hosts a golf tournament yearly for attorneys and judges. Everyone submits their handicaps and plays golf for three days at a golf resort. My friend is an excellent trial lawyer, admired and well-liked, but he is a sandbagger. He says he has a 12 handicap but is more like a 6.

The ostensible veracity of his deception is reinforced by his unorthodox setup. He aims his feet, hips, and shoulders to the right and closes the face of the club so it literally sits on its toe at address.

His backswing is quick, and his downswing is quicker. But somehow, out of all this chaos and confusion, a short but true draw appears. And he is a very good putter.

I think Samuel Johnson was right when he said no man truly knows how he is perceived by others, but to say we do not know is not to say we shouldn't be concerned.

The Apostle Paul was concerned, as shown in the passage above from his letter to the Corinthians. Paul wanted to ensure that he was not perceived as more than he was by those he was trying to reach.

What Paul described two thousand years ago, we today call authenticity. An authentic person presents himself honestly to others. Authenticity splits the fairway between the hazards of hypocrisy and false humility.

It has been said that hypocrisy is the homage vice pays to virtue. Hypocrisy at least acknowledges the existence of a standard; in that sense, hypocrisy is better than apostasy. But Jesus was clear in condemning hypocrisy. See Matthew 6:1-6, 7:3-5, 23:13-15; Mark 7:6-7; Luke 12:1-3.

And for good reason: hypocrisy in Christians is one of the most common objections raised by those who reject the gospel.

Hypocrisy is remedied by holiness. If in hypocrisy, vice pays homage to virtue, in holiness, virtue pays homage to the Holy Spirit. Holiness declares to a world enslaved to sin that the effect of Jesus's resurrection is more powerful than the effect of man's fall and that the same Spirit that raised Jesus from the dead can empower us to live in obedience to Jesus.

The hazard on the other side of authenticity is false humility. False humility is spiritual sandbagging. In false humility, we pretend we are less than we are so that others will think we are better than we are. False humility is pride parading as humility, hubris dressed in dishonesty. The Apostle Paul warned about the dangers of false humility. See Colossians 2:23.

Both false humility and hypocrisy are born out of pride, but authenticity is born out of security and security in the knowledge that I am who I am, but I am not who I was or who I am going to be, by the grace and power of God. See I Corinthians 15:10.

This brings me back to my sandbagging trial attorney friend. You might ask why people like him so much, given his sandbagging. Because he freely and openly acknowledges it. He is sincere about his insincerity, which, in a twisted sort of way, is a form of authenticity. Still, it's better just to say you are 6.

Prayer: Lord, please empower me to live in holiness and humility so that I might draw others to you. Amen.

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