



# THE WAYS

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**SHOW WHO YOU REALLY ARE.** Our church is for “real” people. Bring your true self, including your joys, your sorrows, your fears, your strengths and your weaknesses. God loves you as you are. Don’t hide your struggles, failures or problems.

1. What makes it hard to share your troubles in church?

**READ Acts 5:1-11**

1. What is your gut reaction to this story?
2. Is their generosity overshadowed by their lack of authenticity?
3. Could (or should) authenticity matter this much God and to the Church?

**Scenario:** You are unhappy in your marriage. It’s a statement that continually comes to mind in church when people ask, “How are you doing?” but you don’t say it. You put on a face that says “I’m a happy christian.” but you know when you go home, you’ll feel trapped. Throughout church we talk about good news, but that good news never seems like it’s that good because you are unhappy in your marriage and almost no one knows.

1. Why would it be uncomfortable to admit this in church?
2. On balancing openness and security: Who should know something like this?
3. What spaces do we have where someone can admit something like this?
4. Grab a person in the room you trust. What are you unhappy in that you don’t tell people?

FPC is a group of gathered saints, but that doesn’t stop us from being a room full of sinners. We are a group of people empowered by the Holy Spirit, but that doesn't stop us from being broken by the world. In the pews you will find liars, workaholics, and porn addicts, and you will find people whose trust has been broken, who have been ignored by a parent, and whose marriage is failing. In short, we are real. We have been perpetrators of sin and broken by sin. Thank God for grace. When you come to church, *Show Who You Really Are* and you will find you fit right in.

**PRAY TOGETHER.**

(Pray for us as a church that we would have the courage to be honest with our sin and hurt.)

## DAILY Devotional

**MONDAY:** *READ:* Romans 5:6. *THINK:* Christianity is not moralistic teaching to train yourself into who you should be. It is a place where a mighty God breaks into your life when you were utterly helpless. *Show Who You Really Are;* someone who has been rescued by the power and might of God. *PRAY:* God would show you the places you are relying on your own effort and not His power.

**TUESDAY:** *READ:* Romans 7:15. *THINK:* Sometimes this feels like the quintessential statement of the Christian journey. “I do what I do not want to do.” Sometimes you even plan for what is good and right and find yourself back in the same place of sin anyway. When you *Show Who You Really Are*, you remind yourself and others that it truly is a journey. No, one goes from 0 to righteous overnight, but we try to move in the right direction. *PRAY:* the Spirit would empower your movement towards God.

**WEDNESDAY:** *READ:* 1 Sam. 2:12. *THINK:* Nothing breaks your expectations of control and perfection like kids. Eli, the chief priest of Israel, didn't live up to the ideal of the perfect family. Yet well short of wickedness, we often become embarrassed of our family's messiness as if that makes us bad Christians. Don't “bring your Sunday best,” instead *Show Who You Really Are*. *PRAY:* God would help us find a movement towards righteousness in authenticity.

**THURSDAY:** *READ:* Matt. 23:25. *THINK:* Jesus loved everyone, but sometimes in his interactions with the pharisees, it's hard to see it. In aiming to look good, they neglect actually trying to be good. Why go through the hard, heart work of rooting out wickedness when you can just hide it away. When you *Show Who You Really Are* you might look worse, but you will be getting better. *PRAY:* the Spirit would give us the grace to be a broken community together.

**FRIDAY:** *READ:* Gen 3:12. *THINK:* This is advanced blame shifting. To Adam, it is both God's and Eve's fault. When the ultimate goal is looking blameless we work to shift blame to someone else. How blessed we are that our faith doesn't require blamelessness but repentance. Own your mistakes and your failures and *Show Who You Really Are*. *PRAY:* in repentance for the blame you would rather shift.

**SATURDAY:** *READ:* 2 Sam. 13:12-14. *THINK:* Does that hurt to read? It should. Imagine her yelling the words, “No, my brother.” and he took her anyway. Those words or words like them have been yelled by members of our congregation, maybe even by you. Can you *Show Who You Really Are* at FPC? Because if you can't, Tamar certainly can't. *PRAY:* that God would lead us to be an honest safe harbor for women like Tamar.