

REFLECTIONS

February 27, 2005

**If I must boast, I will boast of the things
that show my weakness.**

2 Corinthians 11:30

Who Am I?

My favorite Broadway musical is *Les Misérables* and one of the moving moments of the show is a reflective scene entitled, “*Who Am I?*” In this scene the hero, Jean Valjean, laments the lie that he lives by pretending to be someone that he is not, and questions, “*Can I conceal myself evermore? Pretend I’m not the man I was before? And must my name until I die be no more than an alibi? Must I lie?*”

Have you ever asked yourself these questions? Why do we allow the world to influence how we define who we are? What compels us to disguise ourselves as something we believe the world will approve of and conceal the things that fall short of worldly expectations? Even though I will argue for honesty as a core value, I personally have a lot of trouble facing these incriminating questions.

Not so long ago I led a small group in a morning devotional. During that time I found myself uncharacteristically sharing with them some of the life challenges that I was facing. They came to know that behind the disguise of my smiling confident face lay a hurting man reduced to submission and reaching to God for help. Afterwards one of my dear friends approached me with a hug and then, looking me straight in the eye, he offered, “Richard that is the most vulnerable I have ever seen you be and the message is the most impactful one I have heard you deliver.”

Our hero in the show also experiences the freeing power of truth as his crescendo concludes, “*How can I ever face my fellow men? How can I ever face myself again? My soul belongs to God, I know. I made that bargain long ago. He gave me hope when hope was gone. He gave me strength to journey on. Who am I? Who am I? I’m Jean Valjean!*”

Deceit becomes a dreadful burden when we disguise who we are in our efforts to convince the world of our invulnerable strengths—

But when we expose the truth of who we are, the burdens are freed and God is revealed through our weakness.

*You are the light of the world,
Richard +*