

The Imposter

From the place of our woundedness we construct a false self. We find ways that work for us, and we try to live off them. "When I was eight," confesses Brennan Manning, "the imposter, or false self, was born as a defense against pain. The imposter within whispered, 'Brennan, don't ever be your real self anymore because nobody likes you as you are. Invent a new self that everybody will admire and nobody will know.'" Notice the key phrase: "as a defense against pain," as a way of saving himself. The imposter is our plan for salvation.

So God must take it all away. He thwarts our plan for salvation; he shatters the false self. Our plan for redemption is hard to let go of; it clings to our hearts like an octopus. Genesis 3:6-9 we read, "So she took some of its fruit and ate it; she also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. ⁷ Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.

⁸ Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden at the time of the evening breeze, and they hid from the Lord God among the trees of the garden.

⁹ So the Lord God called out to the man and said to him, "Where are you?"

They made coverings for their shame, they went into hiding, they began to blame, in this case

due to their own sin, and the imposter was born, a false self, a false salvation.

But God is good and He cares for us. He calls us out of hiding. Gives us a chance to face the truth, because the truth will set us free. Jesus is that truth, and His truth is grace, mercy, forgiveness, love, a place of belonging and restoration to be who we were created to be, to walk with Him in relationship once again.

Why would God want to call us out of hiding to deal with something that brings up so much pain? The false self, our plan for redemption, seems so right to us. It shields us from pain and secures us a little love and admiration. But the false self is a lie. It's a deadly trap.

God loves us too much to leave us there. So he pushes us to deal with the pain so we can shed the coverings, expose the imposter within ourselves so we can be who He created us to be. There is only one covering we all need and that's the blood of Christ, that's where honesty, freedom, acceptance and our true self will be found, where we can once again walk with confidence and peace with God.

~ Paul Fletcher, From Brennan Manning's *Abbas Child*