

Shadow Life

Series: Following Jesus: Identity In Christ

Ecclesiastes 8:12-13 TM (0912)

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Ecclesiastes 8:12-13 TM *Even though a person sins and gets by with it hundreds of times throughout a long life, I'm still convinced that the good life is reserved for the person who fears God, who lives reverently in his presence, and that the evil person will not experience a "good" life. No matter how many days he lives, they'll all be as flat and colorless as a shadow—because he doesn't fear God.*

I. The most profound burden of humanity

a. What we all seem to know, but are afraid to admit

b. Giving voice to the shadow life

c. The big lie that perpetuates the shadow life

Hebrews 6 TM *Grow up in Christ. The basic foundational truths are in place: turning your back on "salvation by self-help" and turning in trust toward God*

Matthew 16:24ff TM *Then Jesus went to work on his disciples. "Anyone who intends to come with me has to let me lead. You're not in the driver's seat; I am. Don't run from suffering; embrace it. Follow me and I'll show you how. Self-help is no help at all. Self-sacrifice is the way, my way, to finding yourself, your true self. What kind of deal is it to get everything you want but lose yourself? What could you ever trade your soul for?"*

II. Traits of the shadow life

a. Universal but “manageable” pain

Thomas Merton *God leaves us free to be whatever we like. We can be ourselves or not, as we please. We are at liberty to be real, or to be unreal. We may be true or false, the choice is ours. We may wear now one mask and now another, and never, if we so desire, appear with our own true face. But we cannot make these choices [without consequences].*

Thomas Merton *Every one of us is shadowed by an illusory person: a false self. This is the [person] that I want myself to be but who cannot exist, because God does not know anything about [this person]. ... My false and private self is the one who wants to exist outside the reach of God’s will and God’s love—outside of reality and outside of life. And such a self cannot help but be an illusion.*

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b. Hiding

Genesis 3:7-10 NLT ⁷*At that moment, their eyes were opened, and they suddenly felt shame at their nakedness. So they strung fig leaves together around their hips to cover themselves.*

⁸*Toward evening they heard the LORD God walking about in the garden, so they hid themselves among the trees. ⁹The LORD God called to Adam, “Where are you?”*

¹⁰*He replied, “I heard you, so I hid. I was afraid because I was naked.”*

Thomas Merton *To say I was born in sin is to say I came into the world with a false self. I was born in a mask. I came into existence under a sign of contradiction, being someone that I was never intended to be and therefore a denial of what I am supposed to be.*

c. Worshipping creation

Romans 1:25 NIV ²⁵*They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator—who is forever praised.*

d. The shadow church

2 Timothy 3:1, 5 NLT ¹*You should also know this, Timothy, that in the last days there will be very difficult times. ... ⁵They will act as if they are religious, but they will reject the power that could make them godly. You must stay away from people like that.*

III. Life Beyond Shadow Life