

Under the Mask

by Welby O'Brien Bayer

It sure wasn't funny at the time. That Halloween I was so proud of my cool costume: an alien, complete with green face. However, no one told me that food coloring on one's skin does not wash out. For a very looong time.



Tonight there are people everywhere wearing costumes and masks. And ironically tomorrow most will still be wearing a mask of some kind: legalism, people pleasing, perpetual attempts at perfectionism, or projecting an image for fear of what is under the mask.

I know. Green face aside, I have spent most of my life under a mask. I never knew who I was.

I wasted my energy trying to be what I thought others expected. Now rather than run from reality, I've learned to face it and embrace it. I am discovering the freedom that truth brings! Even with all my limitations and weirdness, I like being me.

Most of us hide from the truth because of past pain, fear of rejection, longing for affection, etc. All understandable. None healthy. Covering up the need only deepens it. It holds me hostage. This is not life! How can I experience genuine connections with others? How can I be close to God, with an open heart, and ready to learn and grow if I put up a defense? A brick wall.

Jesus died and rose to give us abundant life! Freedom to live, love, grow and be all He wants us to be! Psalm 145:18 promises the Lord is near to all who call upon Him in truth. Jesus tells us that the truth shall make us free (John 8:32).

Take off the mask. It's okay to be human. Wow. It's freedom to learn and grow! Closeness to others is beautiful when I am real. It starts with coming to God in my moment of need. He is there! And He loves what is under the mask. *You*.