

## **The Great Pretender**

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Several years ago, there was a song about a man who professed to be the Great Pretender. Basically, he had been heartbroken by the love of his life, but was pretending that he was doing well. On the outside, he looked fine, but on the inside, he was hurt and lonely.

Do you know any pretenders? We call them by a lot of different names. Sometimes we say that they are good actors, other times we say they are simply “masking,” or wearing a mask to hide their true feelings. Some people use a very harsh term in referring to these people and call them hypocrites.

We all have different reasons for hiding our feelings like this. There are times that we don't let other know how we feel because we are trying to spare their feelings. Other times, we are afraid that if others know how we feel, they will take advantage of us or hurt us. We believe that by hiding our true feelings, we are able to hide our vulnerabilities.

I believe that what God wants, however, it for us to learn to express our feelings completely, but in a positive way. Some people are up front with how they feel about everything and don't have any concern for what someone else thinks or feels. They have the attitude that “this is the way I am. Take it or leave it.” In actuality, this is also a defense mechanism. They feel that if everyone knows up front what they are like, no one will get too close to them. This way, they don't have to worry about getting hurt.

Other people are overly sensitive and wear their feelings on their sleeve. They are easily offended and hurt, and express this range of emotions, while trying not to offend someone else. They certainly are not pretenders, but have difficulty accepting another person's feelings unless it is affirming and positive.

God gave us a wide range of emotions and fully expects us to learn to express all of them, but in the proper context and in a productive way. We can express anger without hurting someone else, just as we can express sadness in such a way that we don't become hysterical or out of control.

One advantage to expressing our feelings to others is to allow them to sympathize with us. The word “sympathize” means “to feel with.” When we let other people feel with us, we are able to draw comfort and strength from them, while letting them develop a closer bond to us. When we go through something together, we deepen our relationship and become more mature beings. God created us in such a fashion that we work best in conjunction with others instead of alone.

Don't be a great pretender. Allow yourself to be touched by other while you also reach out to people in need.

Semper Fi in the Lord and I hope to see you in Church on Sunday.