**Mike Hipes – Facebook Lesson, September 24, 2020**

Good Afternoon!

It is a common practice these days for people to be wearing masks. There are all kinds of masks now to wear as well! Disposable masks, logo masks, bandana masks, and so much more. I have also noticed that for some folks they now color coordinate their masks with their outfits. Nice touch! Masks are a cover, a form of protection, but people wearing masks is really nothing new!

With Halloween just around the corner, kids wearing masks have been happening for years. While living in NY we had a lot of trick or treaters come to our door one year. Earlier in the evening, it was mostly little kids. Before I would give them any candy, I would ask the child behind the masks who they were pretending to be. From Spiderman to Alice in Wonderland I had a variety of responses. As it got later the kids got older and the masks and costumes became less creative. By the end of the night, I had two teenage boys show up. One was wearing a black garbage bag with a cut out for his head to pop through and the other boy was wearing no costume at all! Holding my bucket of candy, I ask, and who are you supposed to be? The boy with the bag said a Hobo! When I asked the second boy the same question he simply answered, with his heavy NY accent, I’m Nuttin! I said, your Nuttin? About that time my wife Margie called out from the kitchen to me saying, who’s at the door Mike? I answered, “It’s Nuttin Honey!” I guess he just reminded me of the old brand of Cheerios, Nut -&-Honey!

As I said earlier, wearing masks is really nothing new! In fact, people have been wearing masks, covers, protecting themselves, hiding their inside thoughts, feelings, beliefs, practices, and more for as far back as I can remember! The truth is that we all wear masks, don’t we? Some folks have multiple levels of masks while others only wear a few. But I would venture to say that everybody is a holdout when it comes to removing their final mask and reveling openly all of who they truly are internally. The reason is, that to be that venerable and open and possibly be rejected is a pain that most are too fearful to risk! Most people hold on to that final cover of protection for self-preservation purposes!

The truth is however, that God Himself sees past all of our masks including the last one! Listen to Hebrews 4:13, “Nothing in all creation is hidden from God’s sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account.”

What beautiful though! Even after seeing into the depths of our soul and heart He loves us and always will! Listen to Romans 8:35-39: “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? ....... No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

While I was pulling into a very crowded parking lot at a shopping center one time all of the drivers were looking for a close empty parking space. Tensions must have been high as this one woman began blowing her horn behind me. I finally drove to the back and parked my car. As I was heading toward the grocery store, I noticed the woman who was honking at me exiting her car and walking up to the store as well. I walked up alongside of her and said, “excuse me but you seem to be having a hard day.” When she turned and recognized me see got nervous and started apologizing. I said you can relax but it does seem like you were a lot bolder in your car when you were surrounded by all that metal than you are out here in the open. She only stared back at me. I wished her a good day.

Spiritual masks can be like that! We may feel protected from others by surrounding ourselves with certain behaviors that keep people from seeing our vulnerable side. But God sees all and knows all after we are unprotected and vulnerable before Him. The great news is that despite our failures and shortcomings He will always love us and be there for us! Remember Hebrews 13:5 where God has said, “Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.”

Have a great day,

Mike