

Monster of Life-delusion

They sensed their vulnerability and rushed to hide their naked bodies, stitching fig leaves into crude loincloths. The man and his wife took cover among the trees and hid from the God.

(Genesis 3:7-8)

This is part three in our **Monster of Life** series. Check out the first two posts: Disconnection and Disease.

*“Self-improvement represents a \$10 billion per year industry in the U.S. alone. The New Statesman’s Barbara Gunnell forecasts a secure future for positive psychology, noting that ‘never has an age been so certain that it deserves not just freedom from distress, but positive well-being’” (Matthew Gilbert, in *Self-Help Books and The Promise of Change*).*

Satan’s success produced **dis-ease** in humankind. A primary symptom of the ailment is **delusion**—*“The sin underneath all our sins is to trust the lie of the serpent that we cannot trust the love and grace of Christ and must take matters into our own hands” (Martin Luther)*. This belief is lifted from the Monster’s playbook: *“How you’ve fallen O morning star, son of the dawn! Remember how you thought: ‘**I will make myself like the Most High**’”?* (Isaiah 14:14)

Genesis 3 reveals **SELF-HELP** to be the default setting of diseased humanity! After disconnecting from their Creator, Adam and Eve immediately attempt to heal their dis-ease. The therapy is *covering and hiding*: *“Many of us strive to ‘fix our sin.’ We try to hide it and pretend like it isn’t there. But this only leads to more hiding, pretending and despair” (Bill Thrall, in *TrueFaced*)*. This is the **delusion**: the belief that hiding is an adequate remedy for dis-ease—that hiding can produce healing! Charles Spurgeon said, *“The greatest enemy to human souls is the self-righteous spirit which makes men look to themselves for salvation.”*

“The ancient Greeks loved their theater. But the immensity of their amphitheaters made it impossible for many to see the actors’ faces. So, some director came up with the idea of having the actors deliver their lines from behind giant masks. The mask was always a caricature—an overdone, generalized, or idealized portrayal of the character. The actors played their roles behind a façade. The performers were called ‘hypocrites’ (literally ‘one who wears a mask’) rather than actors. We are all performers, and like the actors in ancient Greece, we don’t show our true faces. Because of sin, we’ve lost confidence that we can please the audience, so we feel compelled to hide and put on a mask. We have dozens of masks in our wardrobes!” (Thrall)

A simple illustration reveals the preposterous nature of our self-help therapy. In Hospice, morphine is often administered to terminally ill patients experiencing excruciating pain. Morphine acts directly on the central nervous system to decrease the feeling of pain. **Notice:** Morphine does nothing to address the source of the pain; rather, it merely hides the pain from the brain. So-called “pain killers” are a delusion!

*“Jesus showed the disciples his hands and feet” (Luke 24:40). “We are all wounded people, whether physically, emotionally, mentally, or spiritually. The main question is not, ‘How can we hide our wounds?’ so we don’t have to be embarrassed, but ‘How can we put our wounded-ness in the service of others?’ **When our wounds cease to be a source of shame, and become a source of healing, we have become wounded healers**” (Henri Nouwen).*