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## Take Off the Mask

By Paula White

It was in His presesnce that I ripped off my disguise and told Him I needed His help.

When Randy and I would fight during the first several years of our marriage, the aftermath would be disastrous. We had heated disagreements, and during those times my husband would say as little as possible, then he'd walk away to regain his composure and get his thoughts together.

If I had been willing to leave him alone for an hour or two to give us time to calm down, everything would have been fine. But I wouldn't do it.

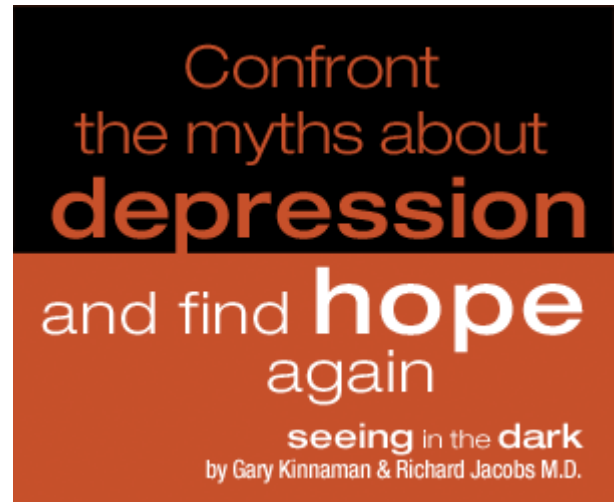
I freaked out whenever he attempted to leave while I was upset about a situation. I didn't care if he wanted to yell at me all night long or if I found myself staring at a blank wall. I needed him right there with me!

My reaction to Randy's habit of walking out during arguments caused more than its share of tension between us. If I tried to convince him not to go, he would shake his head and say, "Paula, stop being so insecure!"

His words made matters 10 times worse. In fact, they would infuriate me. How dare he accuse me of being insecure.

As usual, I carefully pulled out my mask of self-confidence and cited all the reasons why I was secure and why he was the one with the problem. Most of all, I wanted him to know in no uncertain terms how wrong he was to say such a ridiculous thing and how immature he was to walk out in the middle of a discussion.

The results were always the same. I was hurt, he was frustrated, and nothing was resolved.



Does my story sound familiar to you? Are you struggling to overcome some deep-rooted fear? No doubt there are countless people reading this column who can relate to the uncertainty and false sense of abandonment I felt as a newlywed.

One day I got tired of being on the same merry-go-round. I began to cry out to the Lord. It was in His presence that I ripped off my mask of self-reliance and told Him the truth about my real feelings—how insecure I truly was and how deeply I needed His help. When I began to confess my faults to Him, He showed me why I was responding to my husband in the same manner.

From time to time, I've shared with you my testimony about my father committing suicide when I was just 5 years old. The night he took his life, I watched as he and my mom fought over me. When the argument was over, my father left and never came back home, but their conversation had been etched in my mind.

Years had passed since my daddy died, but I was still terrified of Randy walking out on me in the heat of an argument because I thought he'd never come back. I soon realized that I was bound by fear, a debilitating emotion that renders many Christians useless.

The moment I was willing to remove the mask from my life, I was able to identify the real problem—and it wasn't Randy.

When I came to know Jesus, I heard that God was my Father and I was His daughter. I had been adopted—old things had passed away, and all things had become new (see 2 Cor. 5:17).

I got the victory!

Scripture gives us the assurance that if we are forsaken by mother or father, the Lord will be there for us. There's no need to become a master of disguise. We don't have to pretend with Him.

Today, Randy and I very seldom fight. But when we do have a problem, I give him the space he needs. Besides, what's the point in making a scene? He's coming back anyway.

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Paula White co-pastors Without Walls International Church in Tampa, Florida, with her husband, Randy, and preaches extensively throughout the United States and other countries. She is the author of *He Loves Me, He Loves Me Not* (Charisma House) and *Deal With It!* (Thomas Nelson). For more ministry information, visit [www.paulawhite.org](http://www.paulawhite.org). To read past columns in *Charisma* by Paula White, log on at [www.charismamag.com/white](http://www.charismamag.com/white).

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