



**Trusting God's Truth about Us
Frees Us to Love**

False Self/True Self

M. Robert Mulholland, *The Deeper Journey: The Spirituality of Discovering Your True Self* (InterVarsity Press, 2016.)



Robert Mulholland on False Self and True Self

- “The essence of the **false self** is the temptation to take over God’s role in our life.”
- “Our **true self** in Christ is deeply centered in and utterly abandoned to God.”



Robert Mulholland on False Self and True Self

“[Our false self is] a self-referenced way of being in the world that manifests itself in characteristics such as being fearful, protective, possessive, manipulative, destructive, self-promoting, indulgent, and making distinctions so as to separate ourselves from others.”



Robert Mulholland on False Self and True Self

“Perhaps the premier examples of religious false selves in the New Testament are the Pharisees. ...Their profound religiosity was a self-generated effort at attaining holiness for themselves rather than the fruit of a life in loving union with God.”



Robert Mulholland on False Self and True Self

“The [true-self] life hidden with Christ in God is one of such growing union with God in love that God’s presence becomes the context of our daily life, God’s purposes become the matrix of our activities, and the values of God’s kingdom shape our life and relationships; God’s living presence becomes the ground of our identity, the source of our meaning, the seat of our value and the center of our purpose. And that way of being in the world is life indeed!”



False-Self Beliefs and Practices Leave Little Room for Love

My false self is:

- Selfish
- Fearful
- Rigid
- Trapped in despair

My false self resists the truth



Save Your Life/Lose Your Life

When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?" ¹⁴ "Well," they replied, "some say John the Baptist, some say Elijah, and others say Jeremiah or one of the other prophets." ¹⁵ Then he asked them, "But who do you say I am?" ¹⁶ Simon Peter answered, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God." ¹⁷ Jesus replied, "You are blessed, Simon son of John, because my Father in heaven has revealed this to you. You did not learn this from any human being. ¹⁸ Now I say to you that you are Peter (which means 'rock'), and upon this rock I will build my church, and all the powers of hell will not conquer it....



Save Your Life/Lose Your Life

²¹ From then on Jesus began to tell his disciples plainly that it was necessary for him to go to Jerusalem, and that he would suffer many terrible things at the hands of the elders, the leading priests, and the teachers of religious law. He would be killed, but on the third day he would be raised from the dead. ²² But Peter took him aside and began to reprimand him for saying such things. "Heaven forbid, Lord," he said. "This will never happen to you!"



Save Your Life/Lose Your Life

²³ Jesus turned to Peter and said, "Get away from me, Satan! You are a dangerous trap to me. You are seeing things merely from a human point of view, not from God's." ²⁴ Then Jesus said to his disciples, "If any of you wants to be my follower, you must turn from your selfish ways, take up your cross, and follow me. ²⁵ If you try to hang on to your life, you will lose it. But if you give up your life for my sake, you will save it. (Matthew 16:13-18, 21-25 NLT)



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How Do We Choose Our True-Self Life?

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(Matthew 16:24-25 NLT)



How Do We Choose Our True-Self Life?

- Crucify our false self.
- Let go of our fear and need for control and entrust our whole selves to Jesus.
- Receive the new, true-self life Jesus gives us.



What Does All This Have to Do with Learning to Love?



What Does All This Have to Do with Learning to Love?

How Jesus Defines Love

This is my commandment: Love each other in the same way I have loved you. ¹³ There is no greater love than to lay down one's life for one's friends. (John 15:12-13 NLT)



What Does All This Have to Do with Learning to Love?

- We use up all our energy defending our false-self fortress.
- When we receive Jesus' gift of new, true-self life, we are free to love others—even to die for them.



Psalm 139: God Knows Us Better Than We Know Ourselves

Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. ²⁴ Point out anything in me that offends you, and lead me along the path of everlasting life. (Psalm 139:23-24 NLT)

Meditation

- Ask God to search you and know you.
- Ask God to show you something you don't know about your *false* self.
- Ask God to show you something you don't know about your *true* self.
- Thank God for freeing you to love.



Invitation

Moving Ourselves toward Jesus

Ask God to show you someone he wants you to love. When he does, notice how you react inside. What pulls you away from loving this other person? What propels you toward loving this other person?

Moving Others toward Jesus

Then ask God to help you die to your fear, ambition, and need for control and to love that person in specific, concrete ways. Then act as your true self and give that other person the love he or she needs.

