



- real is raw and a bit messy – because while this is a feel-good story, you don't really feel good watching this video

## Real – messy?

- Isn't that what real is like? We say we want to be "real" – meaning, genuine, or grounded, or authentic – but when we GET to real, sometimes it isn't always what we wanted
- When we are confronted with who we REALLY are – through stress, or hardship, or one of those "perspective" moments when it becomes clear not only who we are but how far we have to go to be the person we wish we were – well, that's not always pretty, is it?
- And so sometimes, we settle for what is beautiful over what's real – in what we say and how we say it, in the opinions we express, in the little white lies that we tell – we paper over the real until it's not so uncomfortable
- Check this out:

## Video: Dove "Evolution"



## Beautiful – lie?

- And other times, as you just saw, we choose to shut our eyes to what is real for the sake of an illusion – a "beautiful" illusion (love the work that Dove has done on this)
- What is beautiful isn't always real, especially in the world of "spin" and "image" that we live in – and you can lose yourself in illusions that promise everything but leave you with nothing – that's the lie of pornography, that's the lie of much of the beauty industry, that's the lie of what gets advertised on TV late at night – and it looks great until you get it home and take it out of the package and realize it's a piece of junk...!
- We talk about "real" in a couple of different ways – the most current form is the idea of "keeping it real", or "being real" – which in "reality", can be messy
- But the more traditional sense of "real" is the adjective, the description of what is genuine – and that kind of real doesn't have to be the opposite of beautiful – maybe...
- Last week we looked at some of the Bible's ancient wisdom on resolutions – this week as we talk about "real", there is more there for us

## **Read/Explain Text: Proverbs 4:20-27, NLT**

**Pay attention, my child, to what I say. Listen carefully. Don't lose sight of my words. Let them penetrate deep into your heart, for they bring life and radiant health to anyone who discovers their meaning.**

- The inside comes out – what can get down into our heart will come out again – “radiant health” – the kind that shines out and makes an impact on those around us

**Above all else, guard your heart, for it affects everything you do.**

- in the original Hebrew, it's called the “wellspring of life” – what the rest of your life comes from (image of a source of water, the starting point of your life)

**Avoid all perverse talk; stay far from corrupt speech.**

- “perverse talk” – twisted words – lies, attacks, mockery, cynicism – all of the things that come out of our mouths that we wish weren't real, but are
- Jesus had it right when he said that “A good person produces good things from the treasury of a good heart, and an evil person produces evil things from the treasury of an evil heart. What you say flows from what is in your heart.” (Luke 6:45)
- We all have areas to grow in – spend a little time with me and you'll know this is one for me – because it's the genuine things we say, the good things we say that are also true and real, that are beautiful
- Listening to people speak sincerely about what is good and important in life, whether it's about ideas or family or the things of God and the spiritual life – that's an amazing conversation to listen in on

**Look straight ahead, and fix your eyes on what lies before you. Mark out a straight path for your feet; then stick to the path and stay safe. Don't get sidetracked; keep your feet from following evil. Prov. 4:20-27, NLT**

- trying to engage all of the areas of the body – ears, eyes, mouth, feet, heart and mind – in the pursuit of a life that is genuine and focused on what is actually “real”
- “don't get sidetracked” – stay focused on what is real and good and beautiful

**Real and beautiful:**

- real and beautiful – one is not enough – real is appreciated, but jarring – like being poked to see if you're alive – and beautiful is more appreciated, if at times undervalued, but missed when it is gone for long (Dove commercial shows how fleeting and unreal beauty can be – not the beauty we are called to bring into the world through the love of God)
- Here's what our website has to say about this value of real – which by the way is one of our shared Reconnect values:

**Real: "Modeling and teaching an atmosphere of grace, openness and acceptance, contrary to our busy and image-driven world, where life-giving relationships with God and people are formed, nurtured and restored"**



**re:connect**  
Barrhaven Community Church

## **Looks like: "No perfect people allowed"**

God sees us as we truly are, and loves us anyway. However, for too long we've pretended that we have it all together, and then acted surprised when the opposite was revealed. Instead of hiding behind masks or pretense, we want to be honest and genuine with God and each other, putting substance ahead of image. Only then will we be able to embrace and demonstrate the beautiful change that God is slowly working in us. There is a place here for you, right now, no matter who you are, what you've done or what you've been through, to belong and to experience the love and acceptance of God and His people. We're all broken in some way - but if we let Him, God will put us back together better than before, one piece at a time.

## **Looks like: Embrace diversity**

God has created each of us to be unique. Rather than trying to eliminate or minimize those differences, we want to value them, by making the most of diverse spiritual backgrounds and journeys, opinions and tastes. We want to explore and discuss difficult issues instead of being divided by them, in a relational environment where people are free to differ and even doubt, as we grow together and learn to love and serve God and each other.

- the Bible stubbornly maintains that having a relationship with God – a transforming, committed relationship that affects the rest of our lives – is the key to experiencing true success and joy in the rest of our lives – to “getting everything else right”
- Proverbs – 3x – “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom”
- No matter your degrees, or your IQ points, or your mad video game skillz, it comes down to having an ever-increasing space for God in your life – yikes!
- You can't really be real without God – sure, you can be honest and open about yourself – but what you show the rest of the world will be lacking, big time

## What does real look like on a personal level?

- Every real (fear) – being honest about who we are, letting God shine through us, not ashamed that we aren't perfect
- Being real is having what is real in your life – what is true, what is good, what is beautiful – and that starts with the transforming love of God in your heart and mine – that becomes a touchstone – a “true north”
- The opposite of real is FEAR – fear that if we are real, we won't be beautiful – and if we choose beauty, that we will sacrifice real – and so we will be cut off from others
- It takes **resolve** to be real before God – the sticky part of the word “resolution” – or re:olution, as we've been saying... it takes being “resolute”

## Key Thought:

### TAKE IT HOME:

**A transformed life continues with resolving to lead a life that is both real and beautiful.**



“Your eye is a lamp that provides light for your body. When your eye is good, your whole body is filled with light. But when your eye is bad, your whole body is filled with darkness. And if the light you think you have is actually darkness, how deep that darkness is!”

– Jesus  
in Matthew 6:22-23, NLT

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## Conclusion: short-sighted? (J.C. Ryle)

- What can I do to help you serve God? Not just like the idea of Him... not just be open to Him... but to get you to give Him your all? To put your life in His hands?
- Intro: J.C. Ryle – bishop of Liverpool, England back roughly 150 years ago – passionate about true faith that made a difference in people's lives, especially those who weren't “churchy people” for church



**Ryle's questions: (from 100 years ago) (chapter 1 of Practical Holiness) – from 1878! (133 years ago)**

- 1) Do we ever think about our souls at all?**
- 2) Do we ever do anything about our souls?**
- 3) Are we trying to satisfy our consciences with a mere formal religion?**

“They are careful to attend all the services of their place of worship, and regular in using all its forms and ordinances... Yet all this time there is no *heart* in their religion. Anyone who knows them intimately can see with half an eye that their affections are set on things below, and not on things above; and that they are trying to make up for the want of inward Christianity by an excessive quantity of outward form. And this formal religion does them no real good. They are not satisfied. Beginning at the wrong end, by making the outward things first, they know nothing of inward joy and peace, and pass their lives in a constant struggle, secretly conscious that there is something wrong, and yet now knowing why... If you love life, do not be content with the husk, and shell, and scaffolding of religion.” (Ryle, Practical Religion, 5-6)

- 4) Have we received the forgiveness of our sins?**

“...all of us must confess that we are more or less “*sinner*,” and, as sinners, are guilty before God and, as guilty, we must be forgiven, or lost and condemned for ever at the last day. Now it is the glory of the Christian religion that it provides for us the very forgiveness that we need, -- full, free, perfect, eternal, and complete... This forgiveness of sins has been purchased for us by the eternal Son of God, our Lord Jesus Christ. He has purchased it for us by coming into the world to be our Saviour, and by living, dying, and rising again, as our Substitute, on our behalf. He has bought it for us at the price of His own most precious blood, by suffering in our stead on the cross, and making satisfaction for our sins. But this forgiveness, great, and full, and glorious as it is, does not become the property of every man and woman, as a matter of course. It is not a privilege which every member of a Church possesses, merely because he is a Churchman. It is a thing which each individual must receive for himself by his own personal faith, lay hold on by faith, appropriate by faith, and make his own by faith; or else, or far as he is concerned, Christ will have died in vain.” (Ryle, Practical Religion, 6)

**Response: Full Attention (band) – prayer**