

Secular Authenticity vs. Gospel Vulnerability:

Charles Taylor, in his book *A Secular Age*, describes our current cultural climate as “the age of authenticity”. Here’s how he says it:

“I mean the understanding of life which emerges with the Romantic expressivism of the late-eighteenth century, that each one of us has his/her own way of realizing our humanity, and that it is important to find and live out one’s own, as against surrendering to conformity with a model imposed on us from outside, by society, or the previous generation, or religious or political authority (475).”

What comes along with this spirit of authenticity, expressivism, and in many ways radical individualism is a willingness to share just about everything with just about anyone. Because, after all, we are all in pursuit of our truest selves, and no one and nothing should stand in the way of that. We don’t have to fear rejection, because we are being true to the highest authority in our universe....us.

Professor, Author, and Speaker Brené Brown, a modern day herald for authenticity states, *“Authenticity is the daily practice of letting go of who we think we’re supposed to be and embracing who we are.”*

Now in many ways, we as Christians, would agree with this! We should be able to identify where we are in life. We should be able to be honest with ourselves and with others about who we are. However, Brown, and the rest of the authenticity movement for that matter, miss the mark on true Gospel vulnerability. The invitation of the Scriptures and the Spirit is much deeper and more beautiful than simply “be who you really are.”

There is a distinct difference between the authenticity of our secular age, and the vulnerability available to us in the good news of the gospel. It’s only when we truly step into gospel vulnerability that we find life, freedom, and forgiveness. Here are some differences between the two:

Secular Authenticity:	Gospel Vulnerability:
“Accept me as I am, because I’m not going to change.”	“Accept me as I am, and help me change into the image of Christ.”
I can boast in my weaknesses because they are my authentic self.	I can boast in my weaknesses because that is where Christ gets the glory.
The goal of the journey is self-discovery.	The goal of the journey is more of Jesus.
I am the highest authority over my life, you can’t tell me what to do.	Christ is my ultimate authority, His Word shapes my life.

We are invited to be vulnerable and honest about who we really are. That’s the good news of Jesus: We are invited to come as we are. But it doesn’t stop there. We are invited to come as

we are, welcomed in as fully known and fully loved, then through the Spirit and the Scriptures we are changed and molded into fully formed followers of Jesus.

For more:

<https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/trevin-wax/discipleship-in-the-age-of-authenticity/>

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R_IBHXVfVeA

<https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/preach-to-the-secular-age/>