



## if you've been walking on eggshells

Pretend you can see my photo of an omelette-in-progress, brought to you by strategic camera placement so as to avoid showing all the grungus on the stove top.

Is that okay, though? Showing a snapshot of one thing to conceal another? Or should I just zoom out and show you everything in the kitchen?

I think it's okay to share snapshots as long as we're honest about life. The internet isn't a safe place to invite criticism because critics find so many flaws with honest expression, anyway.

Armchair quarterbacks online give advice to professional photographers about lighting, mistaking natural lighting for flash. People who claim to be Christian lecture, "You can't ask God to make heaven on earth" even though He literally said Matthew 6:10. And of course, there are those who will ask why you hate and oppress chickens (or quail) by cooking eggs.

People are weird, man. But most of us are at least a respectable, kind, sane level of weird.

So how do we share in peace? How do we express ourselves transparently in a way that protects us and still doesn't compromise honesty by pretending to be something we're not?

Because here's the thing: Even that carefully angled photo of the omelette isn't perfect. I can find plenty to critique — the eggs aren't really whipped, there's a lot of gross egg white, the green onions are clumped in places and not perfectly scattered.

But would any of you really care about that, if you even noticed? Probably not. You're probably too busy being your own worst critic to notice the things I would criticize myself over.

Everyone has enough hard stuff to deal with. We don't have to contribute to someone's discouragement. We can be those who stoke flames of joy and enthusiasm and inspiration and humor rather than those who say, "Welllll, those quail will make a lot of poop. Yep, lots of poop, and butchering is no fun at all. I remember when [insert depressing story of chicken being prepared for dinner 70 years ago] and we'll just see how you like having birds when that time comes." (Actual conversation I've had.)





We don't need that. There's enough work to be done in front of each of us and enough bravery we're each having to fight for to not waste time taking the dampers seriously. We will be stokers of joy, truth, and encouragement instead.

No, it's not all sunshine and roses, and yes, speaking truth in love isn't always warm and fuzzy. But we can protect an atmosphere of transparency by not covering everyone's light with a wet blanket.

We have to keep the fire going. How else will we have enough heat to cook omelettes with?

*A fool takes no pleasure in understanding,  
but only in expressing his opinion.  
The words of a man's mouth are deep waters;  
the fountain of wisdom is a bubbling brook.*  
— Proverbs 18:2&4

But also, unless it's obvious (like the weirdo on the internet), we shouldn't assume others are judging or criticizing us, either.

For example, that person who seemed annoyed with you probably wasn't. The person who looked at you funny wasn't judging you. The person who answered you with a short tone of voice wasn't angry at you.

They probably had other things on their mind: pain, or distraction, or stress, or insecurities, or memories of trauma. Their response was not about you; it had nothing to do with you...except that the Lord trusted you to be in the other end of their response so you would pray for them.

So pray for them. Call out the gold and intercede for their healing and victory, and make the experience mean something. You get to partner with God in destroying the works of the enemy. You'll feel better, and the burden of the disturbing interaction will be lifted.

And one more thing, if you've been feeling stifled or kept small in the presence of others:

You don't have to dismiss your feelings, grief, outrage, circumstances, etc, just because they don't seem as big or important as someone else's.





Don't dismiss your progress that seems so much smaller than someone else's, either. Comparison will kill your love for God and your love for people.

*When Peter saw him, he said to Jesus, "Lord, what about this man?" Jesus said to him, "If it is my will that he remain until I come, what is that to you? You follow me!"*

— John 21:21-22

One sunset does not look at the sunset from the night before and think, "Oh, I'm not really setting very well, my colors aren't as bright as last night's sunset." And today's sunrise didn't think, "Yesterday's colors were so much more vibrant, I must not really be rising."

Your experience stands on its own. Beloved, stop comparing it to those around you. Jesus knows and He sees, and you don't have to prove anything. Moving through our situations is much smoother when we don't complicate them with other people's situations.

*For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God.*

— 1 Corinthians 2:11-12

Lord, give us wisdom with difficult people. And help us not to be difficult people.

We come against hair-splitting, nitpicking, determined-to-be-offended-ness in Jesus' name. We come against the religious spirit that walks in fear and insecurity, and we ask for wisdom to know how to handle that kind of immaturity in others. If there's any remnant of it in us, root it out of us.

Help us to walk in love, and to walk with good boundaries. We don't have to correct everyone, especially strangers, and we don't have to come under the condemnation of weirdos on the internet. We can let it go, and let You do the speaking. We will abide and wait for the right response, and trust You when the right response is to make no response. Protect our families and our hearts this weekend. Thank You for healing, growth, and freedom.

*Let love be genuine. Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good. Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor.*

— Romans 12:9-10

