

## Rationalizing

- I. **rationalize:** *trans.* To render conformable to reason; to explain on a rational basis. b. To clear away by reasoning. c. *Psychol.* To give plausible reasons for (one's behaviour) that ignore, conceal, or gloss its real motive.
- A. The truth of God is in accord with sound reasoning. We subscribe to a rational faith that can be declared. **ACT 17:1-3; 1PE 3:15.**
  - B. Sinfulness, though, reasons away from truth to accommodate sin or weakness. **LUK 20:4-7; 14:16-21; EXO 4:10-14.**
    - 1. Hypocrites are prone to this. **LUK 10:29; 16:15.**
    - 2. The best of men can do this. **JOB 32:2; 40:8.**
- II. If we would be successful in Christian warfare, we must renounce all deceptive rationalizations of sin or weakness, admit the truth about the sin or weakness, and forsake it.
- A. Rationalization makes provision for the flesh, which we are commanded not to do. **ROM 13:14.**
  - B. Rationalization leaves you a way out if you fall into a weakness.
  - C. Rationalizations are a way of saving face rather than admitting guilt or that some desire has power over you.
  - D. You will never overcome a weakness as long as you rationalize it.
- III. Some examples of rationalization are:
- A. Denial.
    - 1. This is denying that you are doing anything wrong, a defense against needed change.
    - 2. Example: "There is nothing wrong with my unrestrained behavior."
    - 3. This is like Jonah who said he did well to be angry when his anger was foolish. **JON 4:9.**
  - B. Minimization.
    - 1. This is downplaying the seriousness of what one is doing.
    - 2. Example: "I don't have a drinking problem---not since the funnel."
      - a. Sin is nothing to laugh off. **PRO 14:9.**
      - b. God always gets the last laugh on sinners. **PRO 1:25-26.**
  - C. Comparison.
    - 1. This is a form of minimization where you are comparing something you do with something that another person does which you deem to be worse than what you are doing.
    - 2. Example: "I may be a womanizer but at least I'm not a sodomite."
      - a. The same law which forbids one sin forbids the other.
      - b. Either sin makes one a transgressor of the law. **JAM 2:10-11.**
  - D. Blame-shifting.
    - 1. This is blaming someone else for one's error or resistance to reform.
    - 2. Example: "He made me so mad."
      - a. Israel provoked Moses but that did not justify him speaking unadvisedly with his lips. **PSA 106:32-33.**
      - b. Christ was oft reviled yet reviled not again. **1PE 2:23.**
    - 3. Example: "God made me this way." This is the fallen Adam speaking. **GEN 3:12.**
      - a. This cop-out is tantamount to saying that you either don't have the new birth or that the new birth is inadequate to help you overcome the sin or the flaw

- in your character.
- b. The inward change enables one to obey God and be free from the mastery of sin and from resistance to improvement of character.  
**EZE 11:19-20; ROM 6:14; 1CO 10:13; PHIL 4:13.**
4. Example: “The person who reproved me is flawed so that cancels out my responsibility to correct myself.”
    - a. This thinking would nullify the value of any human reproof.
    - b. If the reproof is scriptural, it should be received as if from God, regardless of the flaws of the messenger. **MAT 23:2-3.**
  5. Example: “I had a bad childhood / I was mistreated in the past so I am justified in my resistance to needed reform.”
    - a. Again this is ultimately shifting blame to God Who suffered you to be put in such circumstances but Who also sent His Son to shed His blood for you that you might have abundant life through Him. **JOH 10:10.**
    - b. Joseph was badly mistreated by family and fellows but committed his lot to God and lived righteously. **GEN 45:5-8.**
- E. Affirming one's good points.
1. This is when one thinks that the good things that he/she does lessens the seriousness of a wrong.
  2. Example: “OK, so I watch porn. But I don't hurt anybody. I work hard. I love the Lord. I read my Bible. I go to church.”
    - a. You haven't hurt anybody ELSE. But you have hurt your soul.
    - b. You haven't hurt anybody else YET. Porn consumption is known to open doors to worse sin which does hurt others. Remember David. **2SAM 11:2.**
  3. The church at Ephesus had several good qualities but that did not excuse them from correcting the one area where they were wrong. **REV 2:2-4.**
  4. **EZE 33:13** expressly warns against trusting to one's righteousness and committing wickedness.
- F. Assuming God's approval.
1. This is when one assumes that God is blessing him and therefore approves of whatever he is doing.
  2. Example: “God is blessing my business so He must not be too upset with my lifestyle or beliefs.”
  3. God may be “blessing” as a judgment. **PSA 106:14-15.**
  4. God may be blessing for His own sake, not for your goodness. **EZE 36:32.**
  5. God may be blessing for someone else's sake. **GEN 30:27.**
  6. God did not destroy Jehoram because of His covenant with David, not because He approved of Jehoram's ways. **2CH 21:5-7.**
- G. Delay.
1. This is when one realizes he is doing wrong but delays dealing with it.
  2. Example: “I am going to quit/change/improve .....” (You fill in the blank).
  3. This assumes that you have tomorrow. **PRO 27:1.**
  4. This assumes that you don't outrun a space of repentance. **PRO 1:24-32.**
  5. God's help to deal with the problem is available now and therefore now is the accepted time to do something about it. **2CO 6:2.**
- H. Euphemizing / Spinning.
1. This is when one puts a positive spin on improper conduct or something unpleasant in order to make it palatable or acceptable. It is polishing dung.
  2. Example: “I do not have a rage problem; I am just full of righteous indignation and

zeal for God.”

3. Scripture condemns the idea of calling evil by a nicer name. **ISA 5:20; MAL 3:15.**
10. Accepting defeat.
  1. This is when one thinks that he cannot overcome his weakness.
  2. Example: “But I just can't quit .....” (You fill in the blank).
  3. God's answer is that grace abounds over sin (**ROM 5:20**) and “I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me” (**PHIL 4:13**).

IV. Rationalizing sin or weakness is no escape.

- A. If you have been guilty of any such forms of rationalizing sin or weakness to escape dealing with something, renounce it and yield to Christ.
- B. The escape is found in acknowledging the sin and trusting Christ to cover it. **1JO 1:9-2:2.**
- C. The escape is animated by trusting Christ to undergird you to resist and overcome. **LUK 22:31-32; 1CO 10:13; 1JO 5:4.**

V. When we realize that we have been deceived by Satan, others or ourselves, and that we could have changed long before we did, this can bring the guilt of all those years of wrongdoing.

- A. Satan may use this guilt to spur us to justify the wrong rather than face it. This deception must also be countered with truth.
- B. God's answer: “Hear counsel, and receive instruction, that thou mayest be wise in thy latter end” (**PRO 19:20**).
- C. Only by renouncing all forms of deception in favor of acknowledging the truth about our sin, our Savior, our salvation and our strength can we truly be free. **2TI 2:25-26 c/w JOH 8:31-36.**
- D. The most rational man is the one who fears God more than the pain of needed change. **ECC 12:13-14.**