

The Danger of Denial

We are having a good time together are we not? I have different ones of you write me, call me, e-mail me, to tell me what the show is meaning to you. I want you to know that it means a lot to me too. I do not take it lightly. I am grateful to God. I thank God all of the time that He is letting me do this. I cannot tell you how much I am enjoying this. I feel like God wants to touch your life and He wants to use me to do it. It thrills me beyond words. You know when you are in your destiny it feels great. It is just a wonderful feeling. I want you to be in yours.

We are going to talk about something that could be holding you back from your destiny; denial. We are talking about the danger of denial today. How could being in denial hold me back from my destiny? The reason it does is you are not facing things as they really are; whether it is in yourself or in someone else. When you stop and drop; stop denying and drop all of that lying, all of that lack of admitting, all of that lack of not facing it. When you stop and drop like that, then you begin to see things clearly and you can hear God more clearly. Sometimes you are sitting there thinking, why can I not hear God? What is the matter with me? Why can I not hear God? Other people say they hear God, why can I not hear God? Let us just examine this today and see if maybe you have been in denial about some things. It is kind of like this, "I cannot hear you God. I cannot hear you God." When you open up your ears you can hear Him. That is what we are hoping for today. This will help you.

People will go to great lengths to avoid facing the truth about something, great lengths. It would be so much easier if they stopped and dealt with it. I could say, if we just stopped and dealt with it, because we all have to fight denial. Why? Because it is self-protection. If I play like it did not happen, if I play like it is not going on, if I tell myself it is not really happening, then maybe I will be okay. That is self-protection. Actually, it is the complete opposite of what God says.

(When you look at this picture, I had them put up a funny picture of this man with his head in the sand. I got tickled every time I looked at that picture and I thought I am going to pick this one because I think everybody will look at it and laugh.) We do that! We stick our head in the sand just like an ostrich. We think that nobody knows, nobody knows, they cannot see, I cannot see and it is really just our head that is covered up. Put your hands over your eyes. Look at that picture of that guy with his hands over his eyes. If you cannot see it, it must not be there. Take your hands down. It is there. It never went away. It was there all of the time. It is time to stop and drop. Stop denying, drop the façade and deal with it like it really is.

If you have to admit to mistakes, it is especially hard. There is something about admitting that I was wrong that makes you feel uncovered and vulnerable. It seems like if I say I was wrong I am less than, I can be attacked, I can be put down, I can be embarrassed. I can be shamed and so that is why people deny. That is why they do it. Have you ever heard the funny saying that Cleopatra was the queen of denial, pretty funny. Sometimes the truth is so hard to admit that we cannot deal with it. It is too painful. It is like push it down, play like it never happened, lock it out of your mind and then maybe it never happened, but it did. God said, "Let us deal with it. Let us talk about it. Let Me heal you. I can heal you if you will let Me." It can go away and you do not have to be in denial anymore. Would that not be great?

Have you ever noticed that when God is wanting to deal with something in your life, He brings it around and around and around? Finally you say, "Okay, Lord. I will deal with it." There is a story about going around the mountain. Have you heard that little Christian saying that you go around the mountain and God says deal with this and you go around the mountain again and around the mountain again, and you think why am I not going anyplace? I feel like I am going in circles. God says, "You are, until you deal with this."

Today is your day to open up and deal with it. Are you ready? Today is the day. Remember what you are going to have to fight. This is hard. I am not saying it is not hard. It is hard. That is why people do not do it, but you can have victory with Jesus. Jesus can enable you to deal with anything. It does not matter.

There is somebody watching this show right now and you are going through something so scary that you are paralyzed. You are having trouble breathing. You are even having trouble going through air in your nose. You just do not know if you are going to be able to survive it. God says, "Even something as scary as this, I will help you with if you call on me." Whoever you are, drop your head right now and say, "That is me Lord. I am calling on You to help me with this." Be sure and e-mail me what God did for you because you will see it. I have been in terrible places and cried out to God. I was so scared I did not think there would ever be an answer and there was.

What are the things you are going to have to fight? They are really your enemy because they stop you from moving in truth and they keep you living in denial. What are these enemies? Who are your enemies? Fear, shame, guilt, fear of the consequences and self-protection. Every one of those talks to you. Fear says you need to be really afraid of what could happen. You do not know it is going to happen and 87 percent of what you worry about never ever happens, 10 percent happens and it is not as bad as you thought it would be and 3 percent you could not stop no matter what because you are not God and you cannot control events. Fear makes you think, what is going to happen? What if? What if? Shame is an enemy, what does it do? You ought to be ashamed of yourself, if people find out about this that will prove who you are, that is terrible. Guilt is your enemy. It says you are no good. You do stuff like this and you are just bad. Fear of the consequences, if you come clean, if you tell the truth you could lose everything. God says "No, the truth will set you free." Self-protection, nobody is watching out for me. If I admit that this happened or that I did this, I am not protected. You see, you really have not learned to trust God for your future.

Do you believe God is who He says He is? Do you believe Jesus is who He says He is? Do you believe it outside of church, not just in church? If you do, trust yourself to God. If you are having trouble doing that, get in the Psalms. There are 150 Psalms. Just start thumbing through them. It might be that you get to 41 or 40 or 75 or 86 or 92. It does not matter. You will find one that describes exactly what you are feeling on the inside. No matter how depressing some Psalms are in expressing those feelings, by the time they get to the end of the Psalms they have faith in God. They are trusting God. They are believing God. You have to remember, the Bible is thousands of years old. That means for thousands of years people have believed the Bible. They have believed God. They have believed that God would do what He said He would do. They had these things too; fear, shame, guilt, fear of the future, fear of consequences, self-protection. They had those same fears. People read the Bible and said "I am going to trust God. I am going to believe God." God came through for them. He will come through for you. Why would He treat you any different? He is not a respecter of persons. He will treat you just like He has people for thousands of years.

What is another reason why we go into denial? Pain. Big bad pain. If I deny it, it does not hurt. If I deny it, I can pretend it did not happen. There are things that we have not conquered yet and that is painful, because the things that you have not conquered have consequences. You are struggling and so denial wants to jump in there and say, "Let me be your buddy. Let me help you. Let us just play like it is not here. Hey, go get drunk. Hey, go get high. Just deny that it is here. So you are losing your job, so you are not showing up for work, so you are not being a good employee. Hey, let us go party." That is a form of denial. I do not want to face the consequences. I do not want to accept how things are just like they are so I will just go "Hey, let us go have a party." Push it away. Deny it.

Things you are ashamed of is another reason for denial. You know it is possible to do things that you are so ashamed of that you do not want to admit you did it. I see that. Refuse. No, that did not happen, absolutely not! No, I did not. Are you sure? No, I did not do it. Are you real sure? No, I did not do it. Yes you did. They denied it. They could not handle the truth.

What is the third big reason? When you admit something is a problem then you have to begin the process to deal with it. That is hard to do. Life is not easy, is it? But life is good with Jesus. He is the greatest problem solver I have ever found. I have yet to take Him a problem and say, "Jesus, I do not know what to do about this," or just say, "Jesus, I am weak. I do not know if I can change and I need to change. Would You change me? Would You please change me?" He did.

Did you know that denial is a big part of alcoholism? If you ask anybody that is living with an alcoholic or an alcoholic who has been set free and delivered from it, they will tell you denial is a big part of it. They just do not want to have to deal with it.

What does God say to you? You know God is very, very real. I think that is why I love the Bible so much. It talks about real life, real issues. It is not off somewhere not fitting in, not relevant. It is as relevant as today's problems, just like it was thousands of years ago. Human nature never changes.

It is always there, good and bad. Let us look at a verse that God gave Isaiah in the Old Testament, Isaiah 1:18-20. I am going to give you a little bit of a background on Isaiah first. It is real easy to look at the people in the Bible and think oh well they did not know what it was like to have to live real life. Surely they did not go through what I go through. Isaiah probably came from wealthy parents. He was in the king's court. He was the prophet to the king, several kings. God came to Isaiah and appeared to him and Isaiah was scared to death. He knew he had guilt in him. He knew he had a dirty mouth. He said, "Lord, this mouth is an unclean mouth and I dwell in the midst of unclean people." The closer you get to God, the more you realize that you are sinful and God is holy. Here is what God said to Isaiah. I love this, oh I love this. To me, this verse is one of the best verses in the whole Bible because it is a loving God seeing people like they really are and loving them and wanting to help, wanting so much to help. Isaiah 1:18-20, "Come now let us settle this says the Lord.

Though your sins are like scarlet I will make them as white as snow. Though they are red like crimson, I will make them white as wool if you will only obey me. If you will do it you will have plenty to eat. If you turn away and refuse to listen (that is denial, denial is refusing to listen) you will be devoured by the sword of your enemies. I the Lord have spoken." Does that mean that God is going to get people to kill you? No, He is trying to tell you that you have enemies. We just discussed your enemies in previous lessons. They are what kill you. Fear kills you. Not facing consequences, the fear of facing consequences kills you. All of those things I named. They are your enemies and they will kill you. I think it is really interesting to look at this verse. You have sins that are this color, now they are going to be this color. It gives two illustrations, one is like snow and one is like wool and they both are very white. What in the world does God mean? He is not saying I will deny them too. He does not say they will be scarlet, but we will play like they are white, play like they are white wool, play like they are white snow. He does not say that. He says, "I will make them, not you make them, I will make them." That is one of the mysteries of God, how God can take your sins and make them the complete opposite. What in the world does that mean? Here is a short way of saying it in a little statement, "God will take your mess and give you a message. God will take your trials and give you a testimony." That is what He is talking about.

There are people who have tremendous testimonies of being one way and then encountering God and becoming the complete opposite. Red turning into white, complete opposites, amazing. God says, "If you will obey me you will have plenty to eat." That is what He says in that verse. Now is He talking about food? Kind of, but what is He really talking about? When you are in denial your biggest fear is lack or dying or not having enough. God says you will have plenty. Oh, the gospel is so backward to real life. Is this not the opposite of what everybody does? God says do it My way and you will have plenty to eat. You can trust Me.

How do we deal with it before we come straight clean with God? One way is you push memories down. A lot of women do that who have been sexually abused. They push it down. They play like it never happened because it is so painful. Then, as they get older, maybe in their late 20s and they have a career, gotten married, have children, a house, whatever, all of the things that they wanted have started coming. All of a sudden those memories start cropping up. Maybe that has happened to you. You have wondered, I did not even remember this happening to me, how come I know this now. What do I do with it? The first thing you want to do is deny it and push it down again. Actually, God wants to deal with it. That is what He wants to do with it. He can help you be set free. You can forgive the perpetrator. You can forgive yourself for the bitterness and hate you felt and you can be free. You can say, "Lord, I forgive them. I forgive me. Please take the hurt away." You can pray that as many times as you need to until the hurt is gone and you are out of denial. It happened, yes it did, but I am okay. That is eating good food.

Another case is where you turn off all emotions. This is very, very serious, satanic ritual abuse. It is the most serious. I had to go through a seminar one time in working with somebody who had been involved in cults and satanic ritual abuse. It is horrible. It was almost unbearable to listen to. I mean that seriously. I went to the person who was leading the seminar and I said, "Tell me that this is the worst I will ever hear that the devil can do to people." He said, "It is the worst. You will never hear anything worse than this." It was. It is worse than anything you could imagine. I will tell you, the devil hates you. I know you have heard me say this before, do not mess with him. I do not care what he presents to you, tells you you can have if you follow him or if you get involved with him.

Satan is cool. The devil is cool. No, he hates you beyond words because you belong to God. You are made in the image of God and whatever it takes to destroy you, he will do. Sometimes people split off in personalities. The pain of what is going on is so great they have to split off. It is so sad.

Defensiveness is a form of denial. Are you defensive about your children, job, yourself and your life? The truth will set you free but some people would rather live a lie than just look at it and deal with. Look honestly at it.

Another is to not take responsibility for their actions. That is hard. You place the blame somewhere

Another is to not take responsibility for their actions. That is hard. You place the blame somewhere else. In doing one of the live shows, we had a little problem with how things ran and the guy came up and said,

"What went wrong here? On the schedule you are supposed to do this." I looked at it and I could not figure out what I did. I was kind of embarrassed because it made things not run smoothly and I said, "Oh, that was my fault. Look, I did that at the wrong time." He said, "It is so nice to hear somebody say it was my fault." It is nice to hear it.

Drugs and alcohol abuse will make you avoid pain, in fact that is why people do it. They self-medicate with drugs and alcohol to keep from having pain. There is that denial again. It takes the edge off emotional pain. That is why some girls cut themselves. I know about people that do that, people that pull their hair out. The pain of pulling that out helps them because the pain of the emotional pain inside of them is so great, that just for a minute this pain when they are cutting themselves makes it easier.

How about anger? Anger is a way to deny. How do I know that? Is that in the Bible? Yes. Cain.

Think about what Cain said. If you read in Genesis, "The Lord said to Cain, where is your brother Abel? I do not know, he said, am I my brother's keeper?" There goes that denial, because he was.

There were only two of them. The Lord said, "What have you done?" God will come to you and just nail it. "What have you done? Listen, your brother's blood cries out to me from the ground. Now you are under a curse." Denial puts you under a curse. I am not saying you are cursed by a witch or anything. I just mean get away from that stuff and deal with things. "Now you are under a curse and you are driven from the ground which opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hands." God was saying I was right there when you killed him. I am not in denial. I know what happened. Now deal with it and he did not. His life was miserable thereafter.

Sometimes it is worth it to go through the pain of dealing with it and the consequences of dealing with it because once they are over, they are over. Once you have asked God to help you, he really does help you and then it is over versus a lifetime of denial. Is that really worth it? Jesus is your healer and He is never shocked. He already knows you did it. He already knows why you did it. He already knows all of the circumstances and He already has the answer. He is waiting to help you.

You do not have to beg Him to help you. Jesus wants to help you.

How do you deal with it? There is our final thing. How do you deal with it? How does God want us to deal with it? 1) Avoid self-hate. That is what Cain was involved in. 2) Admit you made a mistake.

I did it God, I did it. 3) Do not judge yourself now with the wisdom you have now with what you should have had back then. Most of us learn from our mistakes. That is how you learn. We would all like to not make mistakes, we would like to be mistake free, but it is just not real life. 4) Anger is not wrong, it is just how you handle it that is wrong. Look at Ephesians 4:26. Just tell God, "I am so angry." You can even say, "God, I know I am in denial. I do not want to deal with this." Give it to God. Express your feelings and say, "Help me. Give me your answer. I admit it."

QUIET TIME QUESTIONS

1. How does denial keep you from reaching your destiny?
2. Why is it better to go through the pain than to be in denial?
3. Who from the Bible was in denial and what were the results?
4. How do you deal with denial?

To watch the video on DANGER OF DENIAL, Pillar Five, Relational Skills, go to www.bettyswann.com.

