

This morning we will look at the top 10 defensive responses people give when they are addressed or questioned about their behavior, words or choices. But before that study can help us, I really need to make sure we are on the same page here, so I have a few questions:

Q1 – Do you sin? Now the Bible says, *"for all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God"* (**Romans 3:23**). So, the answer should be obvious, but we are going somewhere with this.

Q2 – Are there times in your life when you've done wrong and someone needs to talk to you about that? Certainly we can agree that God demands them to do that: *"Brethren, if anyone is caught in a trespass, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness"* (**Galatians 6:1**).

Okay, so if we all acknowledge that sin is a common problem, and we all acknowledge it is God's plan for people to confront and assist us in overcoming sin, why does that process go so badly so often?

I don't intend for you to answer that right now, just consider it. And listen, even Jesus indicates that addressing sin in another will not go smoothly every time: **Matthew 18:15-17**.

But the reason is because the sinner won't listen. They are so consumed with hiding, denying, defending, and deflecting, in defense of sin, they fail to see this process is for their own Good and maybe Salvation!

You wonder why it is so hard to get the courage to go to someone who is sinning. Why do we constantly need to preach on being useful in the kingdom by strengthening someone who is falling behind or away? Well, because many times they will bite your head off! This is not a new problem: **Proverbs 9:7-8a**.

Q3 – I have been that guy. I have been the overly defensive guy, the deflector. I have failed to listen and let pride get in the way of getting right. Have you ever been that person?

Okay, good. I think we are all on the same page. So let's make that list. Let's list the Top 10 most common defensive responses people give when confronted about their choices. But do me one favor. Please resist the urge to say, *"Uh huh. I sure hope that brother or sister over there is listening."* Instead ask, *"Have I been this person? Have I made that argument? Am I still hiding behind these weak retorts?"*

- **"Others have done far worse"**
 - *"Hang on a minute, I am way better than others, why would you come to me?"*
 - Certainly reminds me of the Parable of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector (**Luke 18:9-14**).
 - **II Corinthians 10:12,18** – Comparing is done by those "without understanding!"
 - God is comparing you to His Will, not to others. That's the issue here.
- **"You are a sinner too"**
 - *"What, do you think you are better than me? You sin too, you don't see me coming to you."*
 - Yes I do sin. We all do. But if I am sinning, I expect you to come help me. And two wrongs don't make a right anyway. And this conversation isn't about accusing you of sin, but encouraging you to turn from it, as I must do daily. **Acts 3:19** – And for great purpose!
- **"Judge not lest ye be judged"**
 - *"I'll handle my business and you go handle yours."* This person believes everyone should be left alone. But first remember from our opening verses that such is not an option in Christ.
 - And second, look at the context: **Matthew 7:1-5**. Judgment is important and necessary, and it is hypocritical judgment being addressed. In fact, Jesus welcomed their judgment of Him.
- **"You Don't Understand My Situation"**
 - *"You don't know what I've been through and you are in no position to help me."*
 - That doesn't sound like an excuse, it sounds like a cry for help. Let's talk!
 - And anyway, (**Psalms 139:1-3**), do we expect that reasoning will hold up with God?
 - What I understand isn't relevant, you don't answer to me. What about God?

- **“It Was Just This One Time”**
 - *“Okay, maybe I made a mistake, but it was only once” Or “I only did it a couple of times, it is not like I am addicted or anything.”*
 - Okay, what’s your point? How many sins are too many sins to ignore? (**James 2:10**)
 - And, isn’t it a blessing that we are addressing this so early, when it can be easily overcome?
 - Side note on this is comparing to major church/family/world issues. But how do you pay off big debt but with paying off little ones first. Start with little ones!

These last 5 are among the most common and overused responses. This is where I have found myself and perhaps you have as well. A change in perspective here can help us confront and overcome sin!

- **“I Don’t Believe I Am Sinning”**
 - *“Well, you say it is sin (forsaking assembly, profanity, dancing), but I don’t believe it is!”*
 - Okay, we have a confirmed disagreement on what the Bible teaches about a topic. What should we do? Well, we should study about that. Let’s get back to the Bible.
 - **II Timothy 2:15** – Go ahead. Present yourself approved. I do not have to prove something is unauthorized. Burden is on the doer to prove authority for choices.
- **“That’s Between Me and God”**
 - *“What I do in my life or in my family is my business. Go mind your own.”*
 - But that is just not true is it. What about **Matthew 18:5-11** from last week’s study.
 - **Hebrews 3:12-15** – God has a plan. Take it up with him. Influence matters!
- **“I’m Just A Work In Progress”**
 - Now this is a true statement and not necessarily a wrongful one. Except they usually mean:
 - *“That’s just me. I’m not the Christian I should be and probably never will be.”*
 - This language seeks to justify poor conduct. It lacks the conviction to truly repent.
 - **Acts 8:18-24** – Peter didn’t say, “Oh Simon, you’re a piece of work.” To which Simon replied, “Yeah, you know me, just a work in progress.” They took sin seriously!
- **“I’m Sorry You Feel That Way”**
 - This is the prideful man’s apology. The message here is: *“I’m not apologizing for what I have done, or what you think I have done, I’m just sorry that you are upset about it.”*
 - This is deflective and in no way justifies wrongdoing.
 - **Psalms 51:1-4** – Could you imagine David addressing God that way?
 - Of course it is okay to be sorry someone feels that way, if we mean it. If what I mean is: *“I am sorry this has offended you. And I will study and pray about this, and if I have offended God, I will be sorry for my sin and I will make it right.”*
- **“You Didn’t Approach Me Right”**
 - *“Maybe I could have done this differently, but I don’t like your tone, the words you chose, or the way you have chosen to approach me. Maybe if you’d been more considerate...”*
 - Listen, the way we approach someone in sin is an imperfect science and will always be in less than ideal circumstances and sometimes done in imperfect ways, but is this really a good defense? How has this become about the method and not the thing you’ve done?
 - **Matthew 23:25-29** – Would you have said this to Jesus? (Too harsh, too strict, etc.)
 - *Pharisees were always trying to pin something back on Jesus. He was just trying to save them!*

The truth is, if some would take half the time and energy expended on deflect, and accept that humility is the only course, we’d have so much more peace!

The saddest thing about all this is that the person who needs to change stays the same. Satan loves that. **Proverbs 9:7-9** – All defenses aside: which of these two men are you?

What excuse making folks are missing is one of the greatest results in all of Life: **Proverbs 28:13!**

Peace and Compassion may be a few words away: ***“I am wrong. I am sorry. I will do better. Help me.”***