



Lesson 1 - Denial

Our Victory: We have realized we have a problem and aspects of our life have become unmanageable.

Memory Verse: "You can't heal a wound simply by saying it isn't there" Jeremiah 6:14

Daily Declaration: I don't have to carry the burdens caused by sin - See Matt 11:28

Main Scripture: Acts 9:1-9

The Conversion of Saul

9 But Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest ² and asked him for letters to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any belonging to the Way, men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. ³ Now as he went on his way, he approached Damascus, and suddenly a light from heaven shone around him. ⁴ And falling to the ground, he heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?" ⁵ And he said, "Who are you, Lord?" And he said, "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. ⁶ But rise and enter the city, and you will be told what you are to do." ⁷ The men who were traveling with him stood speechless, hearing the voice but seeing no one. ⁸ Saul rose from the ground, and although his eyes were opened, he saw nothing. So they led him by the hand and brought him into Damascus. ⁹ And for three days he was without sight, and neither ate nor drank.

Overview: Denial is a word that everyone knows but it is also a word that everyone believes is pertaining to someone else. We often say something like, "I don't have a problem, I just need to blow off some steam," or "I don't need help, I just need a boost to get me through the day." and also "I've worked hard all day I need to have a few or smoke one to relax" All of these statements



have been made “OK” by society but in the end they are only just statements to cover up a deeper issue. When we live apart from God, we begin to make the boundaries in our own lives. Our choices begin to be made based on our feelings and desires rather than the truth of the situation. We are oftentimes too prideful to seek help until it is too late, and we have had to lose everything. God gives us the way out of these repetitive cycles, but it first starts with realizing that our ways and choices are what got us here. In Acts 9 Luke writes of the famous conversion of Saul of Tarsus (Paul). Saul was a man who was highly educated and followed the standards that the world had set. He was a Jewish leader and looked up to by many. Paul's problem was that he was a prideful man. He felt because he could justify his actions that he was in the right. He persecuted Christians because they spoke against the ways he was used to. Most of the time we stay in denial because we fear leaving what is comfortable. Eventually Jesus shows up in Paul's life in a big way and shows him the error of his ways. Paul repents and turns from his ways, then God uses him mightily. You have not gone too far, your life is not beyond repair, and you were not meant to live a life bound by the things of this world. This is not only a drug and alcohol problem. Denial is present in many forms. Anger, bitterness, unforgiveness, lust and more have a way of making their way into our lives and making us feel these things are just a part of life. It doesn't have to be. The life God is calling you to is one where those things cannot control you. Before we can be saved from sin, we must first see that we are broken and in need of a savior. To gain freedom, we must be ready to admit we have a problem in the first place.

also see Acts 8:1-3(Paul before Jesus) and Phil 3:1-11(Paul after his encounter with Jesus)



Make it personal with a story where God showed you were in Denial:

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What are some ways we have been caught in Denial?

How can our Denial also affect those around us?

What are some ways we may feel we are doing the right thing but in the long run we are only making it harder on ourselves and those around us?

What are ways we feel justified by staying in Denial? (I have to get high to work, no one will like the real me, I can't just stop life to get clean....)

What are your Goals for this week and who can hold you accountable?
