



DEFENSE MECHANISMS

The fig leaves we wear...

1. **Projection** – We fear that others harbor the same sinful motives we do. If we harbor lust, anger, greed, or competitive pride we will attribute those sins to others.
2. **Reaction Formation** - People cover-up their failures, sin, and guilt by trying to be good or to make up without genuine repentance to God and others. These people try to manipulate and control others with niceness and great shows of love while at the same time hiding from themselves all awareness of what they are doing. Judgmentalism, anger, disappointment, sexual lust, and desire to control others are covered. The truth is concealed from consciousness by an opposite reaction.
3. **Substitution**-People misdirect their attention from important issues to secondary matters. Any area of failure or guilt can be avoided in this way.
4. **Fantasy**- People fantasize rather than face their problems biblically. Fantasy can cover failed hopes, laziness, unrealistic ideas of success, unforgiven hurts, loneliness, etc.
5. **Inversion**- People whitewash or candy-coat reality about others rather than facing things honestly and responding biblically. For example, a widow whitewashes the memory of her deceased husband in her own mind and in conversation with others. He was a drunk, adulterer, and a deadbeat, but she says “he was so good.” The truth is turned inside out.
6. **Conversion**- People generate physical symptoms of problems rather than face them. Pride, unreal images of oneself, anxiety, anger, and a host of other things can be expressed in a psychosomatic way. For example, a Pastor who will not face that he is afraid of what people will think of him tends to get sick on Saturdays and is developing an ulcer. He has a genuine addressable problem converted into physical symptoms.

7. **Displacement-** People scapegoat, blame, and attack innocent helpless, or even guilty parties rather than face and solve problems biblically. A man rages against the minor injustices done to him by tailgaters or those who get the promotion “he deserved” but never deal with their fundamental issue of pride. The real problem that needs to be addressed is avoided.
8. **Denial-** People deny or avoid reality to save face, preserve their pride, or hide from guilt. A mother may say of her son who is hooked on drugs, “he is really a good boy. He just fell in with the wrong crowd.”
9. **Compensation-** People cover failures with other successes instead of facing problems and limitations constructively and realistically. For example, a woman with a bad marriage might pour herself into her children and volunteer work.
10. **Rationalization-** People make excuses and shift blame to put them in the best light. For example, a man and a woman rationalize fornication by saying, “We really love each other.”
11. **Euphemisms-** It sounds so much better to say “I get irritated” than to say “I have a problem with anger.”
12. **Advantageous comparisons-** People compare themselves to others to try to look good or to try to justify their own behavior. “I know I have faults, but I am not as bad as _____.”
13. **Attribution of Blame-** Shifting blame to others, God, or circumstances, etc.
14. **Diffusion of Responsibility-** Spreading around responsibility to avoid culpability. If “everybody” does it, the law allows it, or society accepts it, then it is OK.
15. **Disregard of Consequences-** Ignore and minimize consequences of actions. After a hurtful exchange of words, a wife/husband might follow up with a comment like, “I was only kidding.”
16. **Change the Subject-**sometimes this might be attempted by cracking jokes or some other diversionary technique
17. **Monopolize conversation to keep others at bay**
18. **Run from Problems-** Some people watch T.V. or compulsively eat or work too much
19. **Mock Others-** put in a box the opinion of others who differ from us

20. **Defensive-** Talk loud or get accusatory, trying to bully others to try to promote one's own competency
21. **Overdo Penance** – The poor me syndrome
22. **Minimize problems**
23. **Lie Outright-** lie either to look good or to avoid looking bad
24. **Lie subtly-** putting the best light on ourselves by innuendo, embellishment, or careful selection of data
25. **High opinions-** think highly of our own opinions on every issue