

The Art of Rationalization

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The Merriam Webster Dictionary defines “rationalize” as “the ability to attribute one’s actions to rational and credible motives without analysis of true and or unconscious motives.”

Though the ability to rationalize is as old as humanity itself, it has been raised to an art form in modern American culture.

No individual better epitomizes this truth than Deanna Schwartz, of Manhattan, New York. (Newsweek, 12/16/02, “My Turn” pg. 14)

The Truth About Rationalizations

1. They are by definition false.
2. They are always self-serving.
3. They are habit forming.
4. They are often endorsed by family and friends.
5. They are built on the premise that what’s best for “me” is best for “those around me.”
6. They require the discounting and denigrating of accountability
7. They require monumental justification.
8. They require the permission and participation of others in order to succeed.

In addition to these 8 truths there is one more critically important reality of rationalizations...

They are a direct contradiction of God’s Word and God’s Will.

God’s Rationalizing Truth

Philip. 2:3-11 *“Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. ⁴Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. ⁵Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: ⁶Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, ⁷but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. ⁸And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross! ⁹Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, ¹⁰that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”*

The Antidote for Rationalization

1. Do nothing out of selfishness.
2. Consider others better than yourself.
3. Evaluate the impact of your interest on others before you act.
4. Have the attitude of Christ...

Make yourself nothing.

Become a servant.

Be humble.

Live in obedience to God’s word.

5. Trust God to meet your needs.