

# Are You Living in Denial? The Silent Struggle Affecting Your Mental Health

The Bible says, “The heart is deceitful above all things” (Jer. 17:9). It is quite common for us to act in a way that conceals our insecurity as a means of masking it. That’s what our defense mechanisms are all about—deceiving our hearts into believing something that isn’t true so we don’t have to confront the reality of the very pain from which God wants to heal us.

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Many defense mechanisms are out there. Denial is a defense mechanism we deploy to keep us from feeling overwhelmed with our emotions. When used on a short-term basis, denial can help us ease our way into the reality of a crisis that just took place—for example, the loss of a loved one—instead of having to deal with all our emotions at once. For the sake of clarity, I’m not referring to short-term denial that lasts a couple of weeks. I’m referring to using denial as a tool to keep us from facing the reality in our lives.

Why do we deny? We often deploy this defense mechanism to protect ourselves from the perceived threat we may be facing. When we encounter a problem that overwhelms us, we go into what we call fight-or-flight mode. Denial is our way of fleeing from the problem. It’s our way of “burying our head in the sand” and hoping the problem will go away on its own.

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The problem is that denial is not how God intended for us to deal with issues. God's Word says, "For God has not given us a spirit of fear and timidity, but of power, love, and self-discipline" (2 Tim. 1:7, NLT).



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We often turn to denial because we are not aware of God's loving presence with us. When we doubt whether God is truly with us and deny the reality that He is for us, we walk around believing we have to tackle all of life's problems on our own.

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God just wants us to turn to Him, surrender our problems to Him, and ask Him to guide us on how best to deal with them. God is the source of wisdom (Prov. 2:6), and He wants to guide us lovingly through the maze of life, as it says in Psalm 32:8: "I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you with my loving eye on you."

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