

ILLUSIONS: I can!

Scripture used: [Genesis 3:6B-7 \(NLT\)](#)

OVERVIEW

Pastor Hurmon continued the Illusions series today. Illusions are false perceptions of reality that can end up truly damaging our souls. Today on Father's Day, our Scripture is speaking to the entire community, but particularly and especially to men. [Genesis 2:21-22 \(NLT\)](#) is a reminder that God is proactive, tender, and extravagant in how He engages with us and pours out blessings in our lives, and all of the various forms of provision are a reflection of the way that He pours out His love for us. His extravagant love outlasts all our mistakes and shortcomings, and creates the foundation for us to be courageously vulnerable in how we approach life - to take risks, to be honest with who we are and our shortcomings, and to live centered in God and not in the opinions of others.

KEY POINTS

1. In [Genesis 2:16-17 \(NLT\)](#), God gives free range to Adam and Eve, except when it comes to the tree of knowledge of good and evil. Of course, Adam and Eve are tempted by the one thing that is off-limits to them, and they succumb to the temptation. Then [[Genesis 3:7](#)], their eyes are opened and they realize their nakedness, which represents their sense of being exposed before God because of their choices. They are overcome with shame. All people, including men, continue to struggle with shame in our society today - and often, there is no appropriate language of shame. Shame whispers destabilizing messages of distrust and bondage to us.
2. The popular social scientist and writer Brene Brown is a Christian. She found Christ 25 years ago in Alcoholics Anonymous when she submitted to a higher power to turn her life around. She recently wrote and spoke of her personal rediscovery in the face of feelings of shame of the famous Theodore Roosevelt quote on striving, not being afraid of being the person in the arena striving as others watch, to know great triumphs and even at worst, in failure knowing that one has "dared greatly." This is the essence of fatherhood: being present, always trying, not giving up.
3. After their transgression, Adam and Eve are so ashamed they cover themselves in fig leaves. They are trying to find refuge in silence and secrecy. They shift blame instead of assuming responsibility. [Genesis 3:8 \(NLT\)](#) shows God softly present in the garden, not judgmental but inquiring as to their whereabouts and state of mind. God is trying to save them and is asking them questions. Their deflection makes them miss this opportunity at forgiveness and reconciliation. The door closes on the opportunity to grow and get redeemed. They fail to show courageous vulnerability. They are trapped in the cycle of blame.
4. The management book "From Good to Great" by Jim Collins showed that great companies had CEOs that did not shift blame for errors, although that would be the easy path. They did not look "out the window" to blame others, but instead looked "in the mirror" and asked tough questions of themselves. Pastor Hurmon himself has felt exposed at times, reminding him of when he was a helpless little boy disfigured by a big scar. We must remember to be kind when looking at ourselves. Trust God's love enough to look in the mirror and to depend on His mercy. With God's help, we can choose honesty and repentance, own our commitments and acknowledge where we fall short, and receive His grace and forgiveness.

DISCUSSION

- 1) **HEAR** - The principle of courageous vulnerability is somewhat in contrast to the idea of "fake it till you make it" or "never let them see you sweat." While there may be times in our lives where we simply have to do our best and project confidence, we should always be careful that we are not damaging our soul by the things we feel like we have to hide from others. Have you had an experience of courageous vulnerability?
- 2) **UNDERSTAND** - Consider [Genesis 3](#). Consider Adam and Eve's actions of hiding, deflection, and blame. What are the circumstances in our lives that cause us to behave in the same way? Consider the truth of [1 John 1:9](#). How does the assurance of grace and forgiveness from God through Jesus change our tendency to hide, deflect, and cast blame?
- 3) **DO** - Courageous vulnerability begins with our relationship with God and understanding God's desire to love and forgive us. Often, the next step is living out the reality of His love in our relationships. Through friends and loved ones, we live the reality of being ourselves, not having to hide our shortcomings, and knowing that we are beloved for who we are. Do you have this kind of friend in your life? Consider a next step that you can take in "courageous vulnerability" with God and with a trusted friend.