

Midweek Study

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HOW TO DEAL
WITH
HOW YOU FEEL



God's Answer for Guilt

*"Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death."
- 2 Corinthians 7:10*

What Is True Guilt?¹ From earliest childhood, no one has escaped guilt. We experienced guilt when we stole a cookie or told a lie. **The Old Testament Hebrew word *asham***, with its many derivatives, paints a three-dimensional picture of true guilt.

- The word guilt refers to the fact of being at fault, deserving punishment and requiring a sacrificial offering.
- True guilt is the result of sin.
- When we sin we are guilty, and a penalty must be paid for our sin so that fellowship with God can be restored.

After David committed adultery with Bathsheba, he repented and cried out to God, **"Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight"** (Psalm 51:4).

What Is False Guilt?² False guilt is based on self-condemning *feelings* that you have not lived up to your own expectations or those of someone else.

- False guilt arises when you blame yourself, even though you've committed no wrong, or when you continue to blame yourself after you've confessed and turned from your sin.
- False guilt keeps you in bondage to three destructive weapons... **shame, fear** and **anger**.
- Ironically, confession does not resolve false guilt. **Revelation 12:10 says "The accuser of our brothers, who accuses them before our God day and night, has been hurled down."** He loves to burden believers with false guilt and condemnation. Some of his favorite strategies are: bringing up the past, reminding you of your failures and making you feel unforgiven and unaccepted by God.

How do you know if the Holy Spirit is convicting you (vs. satan accusing you wrongfully)³:

- 1) God will not convict you of something that has already been forgiven and cleansed. Satan loves to bring back up things in a Christian's past that is already under the blood of Jesus.
- 2) God will convict you of specific sins (1 John 1:9). A Christian can expect the Holy Spirit to be direct when it comes to unconfessed sins. Satan loves to make you feel sinful without really addressing a specific. Rogers states, **"[The devil] wants you to feel absolutely miserable about nothing in particular."**
- 3) God will convict you for the purpose of redeeming you (1 John 2:1-2).

¹ June Hunt, *Biblical Counseling Keys on Guilt: Living Guilt Free* (Dallas, TX: Hope For The Heart, 2008), 1.

² Hunt, 4.

³ These points are adapted from Adrian Rogers, *Mastering Your Emotions* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1988), 91-94.

Four Types of Consciences⁴:

- 1) **The Weak Conscience** (1 Corinthians 8:7). People may feel guilty when they should not. Often people feel guilty about things that aren't sins.
- 2) **The Seared Conscience** (1 Timothy 4:2; Matthew 3:7-8). People should feel guilty, but they do not. If you habitually violate your conscience, it will become seared. Often the most effective silencer for the conscience is majority opinion. If everybody is doing it, or at least no one see anything wrong with it, we don't feel guilty about going along. Russell states, "Our conscience is like a computer. It spits out whatever has been programmed into it. If we feed it the wrong information, it will alarm us at the wrong times. That's why it is so important that we continue to study the Word of God, which never changes."
- 3) **The Guilty Conscience** (Hebrews 10:22). People should feel guilty, and they rightfully do.
- 4) **The Clear Conscience** (1 Peter 3:15-16; Acts 24:16). People do not feel guilty, and they should not.

"Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus." – Romans 8:1 (see 1 John 1:8-10)

Qualities of a Well-Balanced, Healthy Conscience⁵:

- 1) We are more concerned with inward morality than simply outward behaviors. The "why" behind the "what".
- 2) We are sensitive and sensible. While not excusing bad behavior, we should also be able to weigh everything so we take appropriate responsibility.
- 3) We should not engage in excessive self-blaming, self-condemnation or self-punishment. Redemptive growth should be the goal.
- 4) We should be able to obtain and accept forgiveness, from God and others.

Five Ways God Illustrates How He Removes Our Sins⁶:

- 1) God removes our sins as far as the east from west (Psalm 103:11, 12).
- 2) God makes our "scarlet" sins white as snow (Isaiah 1:18).
- 3) God forgets (Isaiah 43:14, 25).
- 4) Our sins disappear like the morning dew (Isaiah 44:6, 22).
- 5) God buries our sins in the depths of the sea (Micah 7:18, 19).

You Are FORGIVEN!⁷

F - Find the source of your guilt (2 Timothy 3:16)

O - Own responsibility for your sin (1 John 1:9)

R - Realize that God means what He says (Ephesians 1:7-8)

G - Give up dwelling on the past (Isaiah 43:18)

I - Invest time in renewing your mind (Ephesians 4:22-23)

V - Verify truth when Satan accuses (Isaiah 54:17)

E - Exchange your life for the life of Christ (Galatians 2:20)

N - Notice that God brings your feelings in line with the facts when you obey Him (Hebrews 10:36; Psalm 32:1-2)

*There is a fountain filled with blood, drawn from Immanuel's veins;
And sinners plunged beneath that flood, lose all their guilty stains.
Lose all their guilty stains, lose all their guilty stains.
And sinners, plunged beneath that flood, lose all their guilty stains. – William Cowper*

⁴ Bob Russell, *Life Preservers* (Cincinnati, OH: Standard Publishing, 1997), 87-90.

⁵ Archibald Hart, *Unlocking the Mystery of Your Emotions* (Dallas, TX: Word Publishing, 1989), 116-117.

⁶ Russell, 96-97.

⁷ Hunt, 22-24.