

Overcoming Guilt

No. 167

Introduction.

- I. One the great problems of life is guilt. It is a strong emotion that can take the joy out of living and torment us and make us miserable and wretched.
- II. This is a problem for the man of the world and it is often a great problem for Christians.
- III. Guilt is often found in the most dedicated and sincere of Christians. They are often laden with feelings of shame and unworthiness. Instead of singing songs of redemption, they cry out “O wretched man that I am. Who shall deliver me from this body of sin and condemnation.”

I. The **Causes of Guilt** - Let’s first take a look at some of the causes of guilt.

A. Some feel guilt **over sin**.

1. Many should feel guilty over sin. They have committed wrongs and never repented.
2. Others have repented, but they have never accepted God’s forgiveness. They think they are too bad, too awful, too evil to be forgiven.
3. The Bible is filled with examples of those overcome with guilt.

a. **David** is an example.

1) He was a man who lived very close to God. **Describe.** But David submitted to his lust and committed adultery with Bathsheba. This sin cast him down and took all the joy out of his life. It filled him with guilt and remorse.

2) Listen to his words recorded in Psalm 51. (Psa. 51:1-17).

PSA 51:1 Be gracious to me, O God, according to Thy lovingkindness; According to the greatness of Thy compassion blot out my transgressions. 2 Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, And cleanse me from my sin. 3 For I know my transgressions, And my sin is ever before me. 4 Against Thee, Thee only, I have sinned, And done what is evil in Thy sight, So that Thou art justified when Thou dost speak, And blameless when Thou dost judge. 5 ¶ Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, And in sin my mother conceived me. 6 Behold, Thou dost desire truth in the innermost being, And in the hidden part Thou wilt make me know wisdom. 7 Purify me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. 8 Make me to hear joy and gladness, Let the bones which Thou hast broken rejoice. 9 Hide Thy face from my sins, And blot out all my iniquities. 10 Create in me a clean heart, O God, And renew a steadfast spirit within me. 11 Do not cast me away from Thy presence, And do not take Thy Holy Spirit from me. 12 Restore to me the joy of Thy salvation,

And sustain me with a willing spirit.13 Then I will teach transgressors Thy ways, And sinners will be converted to Thee. 14 Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God, Thou God of my salvation; Then my tongue will joyfully sing of Thy righteousness. 15 O Lord, open my lips, That my mouth may declare Thy praise. 16 For Thou dost not delight in sacrifice, otherwise I would give it; Thou art not pleased with burnt offering. 17 The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; A broken and a contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise.

b. **Judas** (Matt. 27:3-5).

c. **Peter** (Matt. 26:69-75).

d. **Sinful woman** (Lk. 7:36-38).

e. **Publican** (Lk. 18:15).

B. Some feel guilty because they can never do enough.

1. No matter much how they do, no matter how many good deeds they do, no matter how many people they help, no matter how many people they teach it is never enough.
2. They feel unworthy and are overwhelmed by their inability to do more.

C. Some feel guilty because of their children.

1. A child may have a birth defect or some other handicap and they blame themselves. (Couple at Robinson who gave birth to a child that was mentally retarded.)
2. Some feel guilty because their children did not turn out the way they wanted. The children are weak in faith or have left the faith.
3. **Proverbs 22:6** gives a lot of good parents grief.
 - a. Some are guilty because they think this scripture has no exceptions.
 - b. This scripture has exceptions.
 - 1) Solomon the author of the statement is an exception.
 - 2) If it did not have exceptions, the free moral agency of man would be destroyed. A child raised in the right way could never fall and a child raised in the wrong way could never repent and turn to God.
 - 3) If it did not have exceptions, it would be teaching the impossibility of apostasy.
 - 4) It is a general rule.

D. Some feel guilty because men are dying lost.

1. Some have mental breakdowns because of the lost.
 2. They feel they can or should save the whole world.
 3. Every time a person dies outside of Christ they feel more and more guilty.
- E. Some feel guilty because there are **hungry people in the world**.
1. They feel it is their responsibility to feed the millions who are starving.
 2. No matter how many they help feed there are still millions more starving and guilt becomes greater and greater.

For these reasons and countless others that could be mentioned many are filled with guilt.

II. **The Damage of Guilt** - This guilt does great damage.

- A. It is one of the most destructive, cancerous forces in the world.
- B. It can destroy our appetite, our sleep, our health, our happiness, our effectiveness, our relationship with God and others.

III. **How To Overcome Guilt** - It is vital that we learn how to overcome guilt.

A. We can overcome guilt by **repenting and accepting God's forgiveness**.

1. God does not overlook or condone sin.
2. He wants us to be filled with regret and sorrow and guilt.
3. He wants us this godly sorrow to lead us to repentance. (Lk. 13:3).
4. He wants us to accept His forgiveness. (1 Jn. 1:7, 9; Heb. 10:17).

B. We can overcome guilt by **accepting the forgiveness of others**.

1. Jesus taught we must forgive.
2. He also taught we must learn to accept forgiveness.
3. We can never be happy until we learn to forgive and to accept forgiveness.

C. We can overcome guilt by **recognizing we cannot always correct or change the past**.

1. Some things can be changed. We should correct the wrongs that can be corrected. Restitution should be made if possible. **Example of woman who had stolen an item in youth and years later admits it.**
2. There are other things that cannot be changed.
 - a. If we had a 1,000 life times, we could not change them.

b. **Example of lady (Lina) running over a man on dark highway.**

3. We must learn to live by God's grace and accept the unchangeable.

D. We can overcome guilt by **doing the best we can do.**

1. This is all that God asks.

2. He knows our weaknesses. He knows our limitations. He knows we can do but so much. He does not ask the impossible.

3. He expects us to love Him and others and each day do the best we can do.

Conclusion.

I. Brethren, let us fight guilt in our lives. It is a cancer that takes the joy out of living. It keeps men and women from enjoying the immense blessings of God.

II. Let us trust God, accept God's forgiveness, the forgiveness of others and recognize if any are saved it will be by the grace of God.

III. The Bible tells us that Peter preached to the Jewish multitude on the first Pentecost following the resurrection of Christ. He spoke on the death, burial and resurrection of Christ. He charged them with the murder of the Son of God.

A. Luke records these words in Acts 2:37.

1. These men were filled with shame and remorse.

2. They were filled with overwhelming grief and guilt. They had crucified the Son of God. They had mocked Him on the cross.

B. **Peter did not tell them to give up.**

1. He did not tell them to waddle in their guilt and misery.

2. Listen to what Peter commanded them to do. (Acts 2:38).

3. It was necessary for them to repent of their sins. It was also necessary for them to be baptized "for the forgiveness of sins."

IV. Thanks be to God many of them overcame their guilt and accepted Christ that day.

A. Listen to what Luke says about them. (Acts 2:46).

B. We urge all out of Christ to come to Him and receive forgiveness and joy and peace. We urge those in Christ to walk in the light and accept God's grace and forgiveness. Come to Jesus as we stand and sing.

