

Overcoming LingerinG Feelings Of Guilt

(Our Own Worst Enemy)

Introduction: In this lesson we will not primarily be dealing with overcoming actual guilt, but the lingering feelings that often handicap the forgiven. Actual forgiveness of sins is overcome in the blood of Christ, when the non-Christian believes the gospel and is baptized (immersed) or when the Christian repents of his sin, confesses such sin to God in prayer and as he forgives those that sin against him. But how does one overcome the often debilitating feelings of guilt that seem to not go away?

I) Guilt: A Gift Of God

- * Guilt is an uneasiness of conscience; a bothered conscience that helps regulate our behavior.
- * Thank God for it! Imagine if you had none.
- * Two extremes: 1. Guilt dismissed, ignored, suppressed, minimized - not allowed to move us to repentance - II Cor. 7:10-11.
2. Overwhelmed with grief after forgiven - II Cor. 2:6-8

II) Consequences Of LingerinG Feelings Of Guilt

- * Non-productivity - so preoccupied with failings, that we fail to do good; effectiveness is neutralized; do not feel worthy
- * Worry - Can't forget, we fret and agonize over it continually
- * Mental illness - Guilt complexes develop; emotional turmoil; robbed of joy (Ps 51:10-12)
- * Bitterness - Esau became profane (Hebrews 12:14-17) A crusty disposition can evolve
- * Physical health ailments - Psalm 32:1-4

- * Beat ourselves up - Do severe things to the body (Col. 2:20-23) Judas is a prime example
- * Fear death - Insecure about eternal destiny; the very reason Christ came (Heb. 2:14-15)

III) Overcoming Feelings Of Guilt

- * Face the sin - Acknowledge the wrongdoing - I John 1:9-10; Proverbs 28:13
- * Confess the sin to another (James 5:16)
- * Make amends - repent, turn away - Peter a prime example
- * Accept forgiveness - I Timothy 1:15; realize what forgiveness means (blotted out, penalty satisfied, debt fully paid; and forgotten (Hebrews 8:12)
- * Obey God - Baptism is an answer of a good conscience (I Peter 3:21) and so is all obedience to God's commandments
- * Pray daily - Philippians 4:6-7
- * Serve meaningfully - Walk in the Spirit and you will not fulfill the lusts of the flesh (Galatians 5)
- * Do service to less fortunate - charitably give and lose self in selfless service

Conclusion: The Old Testament could not clear the conscience (Hebrews 9:9) but the new covenant can (10:22). Praise God! The key is allowing our guilt to drive us nearer to Jesus, accepting his forgiveness, putting more trust in Him and less in us.