



GUILT/SHAME

SCRIPTURE VERSES (NIV)

John 3:17

¹⁷ For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.

1 John 1:9

⁹ If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

Hebrews 8:12

For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more.

2 Corinthians 5:17

¹⁷ Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!

Romans 9:33

³³ As it is written:

“See, I lay in Zion a stone that causes people to stumble
and a rock that makes them fall,
and the one who believes in him will never be put to shame.”

Romans 5:3-5

³ Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; ⁴ perseverance, character; and character, hope. ⁵ And hope does not put us to shame, because God’s love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.

1 John 2:28

²⁸ And now, dear children, continue in him, so that when he appears we may be confident and unashamed before him at his coming.

1 Peter 3:15-17

¹⁵ But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, ¹⁶ keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander.

¹⁷ For it is better, if it is God’s will, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil.

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TIME TO TELL YOURSELF THE TRUTH

Rick Warren

“The LORD gave us mind and conscience; we cannot hide from ourselves.” (Proverbs 20:27 GN)

The best way to get off a guilt trip is to first admit your guilt. Don't bury it, don't deny it, and don't ignore it. Just own up to it!

Even when we know this truth, we still try to run from our guilt. But when you run from guilt, it's going to catch up with you. The problem with always moving is that you take you with you. The problem is in your mind! No matter how busy you are or where you run, you're going to be just as stressed if your stress is coming from regrets, shame, or guilt. When you finally slow down, all those feelings come crashing back in again. God doesn't want you to live that way.

The Bible says you can't run from yourself: *“The LORD gave us mind and conscience; we cannot hide from ourselves”* (Proverbs 20:27 GN). You may be able to hide your guilt from everybody else, but you can't hide it from yourself.

We as human beings have an amazing ability to lie to ourselves. You say it's not bad when it really is bad and it's getting better when it isn't getting better. You tell yourself you're really further along and better than you really are.

To stop defeating yourself, you have to stop deceiving yourself. You have to tell yourself the truth.

What is it that defeats us? All kinds of things. Worry defeats us. Envy defeats us. Bitterness and jealousy and guilt defeat us. Fear and anxiety and insecurity defeat us.

I suggest you do a little spiritual spring cleaning. A lot of people take time in the spring to go through the house and give it an extra scrubbing or organize things that are normally neglected. At least once a year, you should also do an extended personal inventory of your spiritual condition.

How do you do that?

Talk It Over

First, you set aside a couple hours, and you go somewhere by yourself with paper and pencil. You sit down and say, “God, I want you to bring to mind all my sin. What have I messed up? What mistakes have I made? What do I feel guilty about, either consciously or unconsciously?” If you're genuinely repentant with God and honest with yourself, God's Spirit will start bringing these things to mind. Then, start writing them down.

Why do you have to write it down? Because it helps you be more specific. You committed those things one by one; you're going to need to confess them one by one and show God that you care enough to point them out and be specific.

PRAYER OF FORGIVENESS

Pray Sincerely and Slowly

Dear God,

You know everything about me. You know everything I am ashamed of. You know my regrets, my sins, my mistakes, my habits. You know my actions, attitudes, everything I feel guilt over.

Today Jesus Christ, I admit that I need Your forgiveness. I agree that I have done wrong, I have sinned, and many times I have done what I wanted to do rather than the right thing.

But I not only admit it, I accept responsibility for it and I am NOT going to blame anyone else in my life for it, I am NOT going to make excuses, I am going to own up to what's wrong in me, in my life.

I want to change.

I want to go Your way.

I repent.

I want to follow You and trust You completely.

Jesus Christ, Thank You for what you did and You said on the cross. Thank You for saying "Father FORGIVE them for they know not what they do". I believe that. I ask You to forgive me for even the things I don't know about. Take away ALL my guilt.

I thank You for paying for all my sins on the cross, so I could be forgiven. And now I do accept the gift of forgiveness and salvation.

Thank You for forgiving me instantly and completely and thank You for forgiving me repeatedly and most of all, I thank You for forgiving me freely.

In Jesus Holy Name I pray,

Amen

NO MATTER WHAT YOU HAVE DONE

Rick Warren — January 4, 2016

“We are made right with God by placing our faith in Jesus Christ. And this is true for everyone who believes, no matter who we are.” (Romans 3:22 NLT, second edition)

Because of what Jesus did on the cross, everything you’ve ever done wrong is forgiven. God forgives you freely, completely, instantly, and repeatedly.

Even if there were no such thing as a Heaven — but of course there is — it would be worth believing in Jesus just to get a clear conscience. I’ve talked to thousands of people, and I know that most people are carrying secret guilt, secret regrets, and secret shame. You can be completely forgiven of that!

Romans 3:22 says, *“We are made right with God by placing our faith in Jesus Christ. And this is true for everyone who believes, no matter who we are”* (NLT, second edition).

I love that last part. It doesn’t matter who you are. It doesn’t matter what you’ve done, who you’ve done it with, how long you did it, or where you did it — you can be saved. You can be forgiven. Everything is forgiven when you trust in Christ Jesus.

Talk It Over

- ◆ Why do people find it so difficult to trust and accept God’s offer of salvation and grace?
- ◆ What does it mean to be “made right” with God?
- ◆ Who in your life needs to hear and be encouraged by Romans 3:22?

YOU DON'T HAVE TO LIVE WITH GUILT

Rick Warren — November 16, 2015

God is always ready to give you another chance. That's a bedrock piece of Christianity. We've all been irresponsible. We've all screwed up. The Bible tells us, "Not a single person on earth is always good and never sins" (Ecclesiastes 7:20 NLT, second edition).

God doesn't want you living with a heavy guilt trip about all the irresponsibility in your life. Guilt destroys your confidence, damages your relationships, keeps you stuck in the past, and even hurts your health. I read a report a few years back that said 70 percent of people in the hospital could leave if they knew how to resolve their guilt.

God wants far better for your life than that. You don't want to live with guilt. And here's an important truth to always hang on to: *You don't have to.*

God wants you to live with a sense of promise and hope. God can even bring good out of the stupid decisions that you've made in your life if you'll give those failures to him.

How do you do that?

Admit to God you've made a mistake. It doesn't surprise him. And it won't change his perception of you. I hope you'll take this step today. When you do, here's what you can expect from God:

God forgives instantly. The very moment you admit your sin to God, he forgives you.

God forgives freely. You don't need to earn it, and you'll never deserve it.

God forgives completely. He wipes your sin absolutely clean.

If you're mired in guilt and shame, you'll likely perpetuate whatever problem you have. You'll tell yourself that you blew it, so you're bad. Since you're bad, you believe you'll blow it again. It's a nasty cycle from which we often can't seem to escape — at least not on our own.

You need a power beyond yourself. You need a Savior. You need Jesus.

Talk It Over

- ◆ How have you seen guilt affect other people physically, emotionally, mentally, and spiritually?
- ◆ What keeps you from asking God to forgive you?
- ◆ What do you need to ask forgiveness for today?

"A man who refuses to admit his mistakes can never be successful. But if he confesses and forsakes them, he gets another chance." (Proverbs 28:13 TLB)

A CLEAR CONSCIENCE MEANS A HAPPY HEART

Rick Warren

“What happiness for those whose guilt has been forgiven! What joys when sins are covered over! What relief for those who have confessed their sins and God has cleared their record.” (Psalm 32:1-2 LB)

One thing that causes us to lose our happiness is feeling guilty or ashamed. You’ve got to get rid of guilt and maintain a clear conscience if you want to be happy, because you cannot be guilty and happy at the same time.

Philippians 2:15 says, *“Live clean, innocent lives as children of God, shining like bright lights in a world full of crooked and perverse people”* (NLT).

You might say, “I’d like to be happy, but how do I keep my conscience clear when it’s not clear right now?” You need to do what Psalm 32:1-2 says: *“What happiness for those whose guilt has been forgiven! What joys when sins are covered over! What relief for those who have confessed their sins and God has cleared their record”* (LB).

Happiness, joy, and relief are three things everybody’s looking for in life. We all want to be happy. We all want to enjoy life. We all want relief from our pain. The Bible says it comes from purity, and purity comes from forgiveness through God’s grace.

So, here’s one way to maintain a happy heart: Keep a clear conscience.

This means at the beginning and at the end of every day doing a spiritual inventory, where you talk to God about anything that is standing between you and him, and you deal with the junk from your day. You practice what’s called spiritual breathing — you breathe out your sins in confession and you breathe in God’s power and cleansing. God promise that *“if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness”* (1 John 1:9 NIV).

Talk It Over

- ◆ What do you need to talk to God about today so that you can clear your conscience?
- ◆ How do you need to restructure your life so that you make time each day to do a spiritual inventory?
- ◆ Would others consider you a “bright light” in the world for Jesus Christ? What does your happiness in Christ say to the rest of the world?

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

An Encouraging Word Ministry

Merciful God,
my sins are too heavy to carry
too real to hide
and too deep to undo.
Forgive what my lips tremble to name,
what my heart can no longer bear
and what has become for me
a consuming fire of judgment.
Set me free from a past that I cannot change,
Open me to a future in which I can be changed,
and grant me your peace and your grace to grow more and more in your likeness and
image, through Christ Jesus, who died to set me free.
Amen

“YOU HAVE NO IDEA WHAT I’VE DONE!”

Hebrews 10:22 “ Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed in pure water.” HCSB

We can genuinely repent and turn our backs on the sin and seek forgiveness from people we hurt and still carry the terrible burden of guilt for years on end. Until we let Christ’s work on the cross not only save our souls but cleanse our consciences our own self-destructive tendencies will unwittingly team with the devil to bully us with bouts of mental torment. A guilty conscience can’t keep its mouth shut. It constantly recounts your regrets and reminds you of what you deserve, drowning out the liberating voice of truth. Until the matter gets settled at the foot of the cross and you realize your heart has been sprinkled clean with the blood of Christ, the joy of every victory in Christ will be hijacked by a baffling self-disdain.

Those who never lay down a long-burdened conscience tend to respond to the suggestion of true freedom from guilt with this rebuttal under their breath: “You have no idea what I’ve done.”

Jesus might wish to counter with this: “Actually, you have no idea what *I*’ve done.”