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Daily Devotional - Free From Guilt

OCTOBER 29TH 2015 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional - Free From Guilt

1 Peter 2:22-25

Guilt can be defined as anxiety in one's spirit over a deliberate, willful sin. We can trace this emotion all the way back to the Garden of Eden. After Adam and Eve tasted the forbidden fruit, they felt ashamed of their nakedness and hid themselves.

During Old Testament times, people would bring a special offering to the temple in order to “pay” for their wrong. Today, we no longer have such a tangible way to release our guilt.

Actually, we have something better. The heavenly Father sent His Son Jesus—who was fully God as well as fully man—to live a sinless life. He took upon Himself the penalty for all of our wrongs by dying a criminal's death through crucifixion. Praise God, Jesus rose to life again, conquering death and sin. [Ephesians 1:7](#) states, “In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace.”

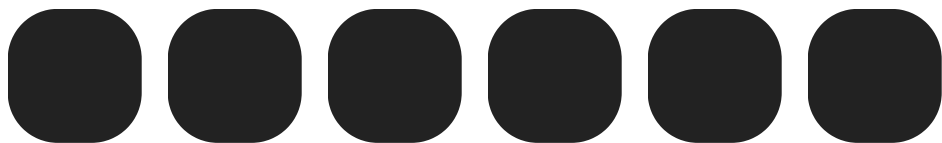
The truth is, every one of us has sinned and therefore deserves to be separated from God ([Rom. 3:23](#)). However, we can be liberated from death and guilt by accepting Jesus' free gift and committing our lives to Him. Of course, in our imperfect human state, we will continue to sin. But our loving heavenly Father will continue to forgive His children ([Luke 11:3-4](#)).

Jesus' sacrifice gives us freedom from shame and death—plus the promise of eternity with God. But that in no way means we have license to sin knowingly. Though we are promised forgiveness, our gratitude and love for our Savior should spur us on to obey and serve the Lord. And, surely, to live a life free from guilt.

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Daily Devotional - Giving Jesus First Place

OCTOBER 28TH 2015 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional - Giving Jesus First Place

[Philippians 2:9-11](#)

When Christ has first place in our lives, we will experience many blessings. These include ...

A quiet spirit. As we turn our attention to the Lord and meditate on His Word, He “leads [us] beside quiet waters,” where we find rest for our souls ([Ps. 23:2](#)). The Holy Spirit will help us shut out the noise of worldly distractions so He can provide assurance of our Father’s love and support. With a quieted heart and mind, we will be able to discern what God is saying to us.

A stronger faith. Studying Scripture will enlarge our view of God and give us insight and direction. Reading how the Lord has helped others, we will gain confidence that He is at our side, enabling us to meet life’s demands. Our faith will grow as we follow His direction and watch how He works on our behalf.

A purified heart. Like a mirror, the Bible reflects back to us who we truly are and reveals where we need to change. When we confess our sin, God promises to cleanse us from all unrighteousness ([1 John 1:9](#)).

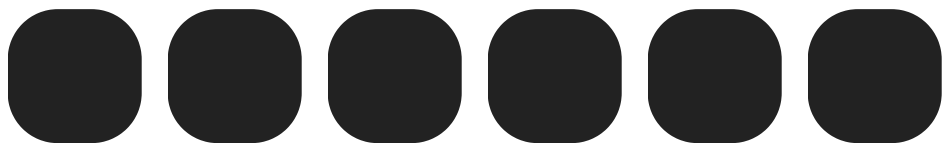
A prepared mind. We don’t know what’s in our tomorrows, but God does. He wants to prepare us for the future—both the joyous times and the hard ones. Through the Holy Spirit’s ministry, we will be equipped for whatever life brings (2 Pet. 1:3).

Paul’s life demonstrates what it means to give Jesus first place. Because the apostle made Christ the Lord of his life ([Gal. 2:20](#)), he knew joy amid trials and received the strength to face turmoil and difficulty. These blessings will also be ours when we give highest priority to our relationship with Jesus.

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Daily Devotional - Our Top Priority

OCTOBER 27TH 2015 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional - Our Top Priority

Luke 10:38-42

Jesus had great affection for Martha, her sister Mary, and her brother Lazarus ([John 11:5](#)). One day He sent word to them that He and His disciples were coming to visit. The women started preparing their home, as there was a lot to accomplish before the men arrived. Martha, however, in all her busyness, lost sight of the importance of spending time with the Lord.

But let us not be quick to judge her. We know that in our relationship with Jesus, He is to have first place above all else in life. Thoughts, attitudes, and actions are to flow out of our intimate connection with Him. But, as we have all no doubt discovered, this is not easy to do. Our own selfish nature clamors for supremacy, and the world with all its temptations encourages us to indulge ourselves. Even while carrying out the Lord's work, we can lose sight of our first priority—deepening our intimacy with Christ.

When Jesus arrived, Mary stopped what she was doing so she could listen to His words and learn from Him. Martha, distracted by all that was still to be done, kept working. The Lord affirmed Mary's choice to be with Him and urged Martha to follow her sister's example. Both women expressed their love and care for Jesus through their actions, but Mary chose the better way.

Nothing should supersede the believer's relationship with Christ; both character and conduct should reflect His likeness ([Eph. 4:24](#)). During Jesus' visit, Martha—with the best of intentions—let her service for Him become more important than time with Him. If friends observed your life, what would they say matters most to you?

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Daily Devotional - When Others Fail Us

OCTOBER 26TH 2015 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional - When Others Fail Us

[2 Timothy 4:9-16](#)

The apostle Paul knew the value of good friends: Silas partnered with him in establishing new churches; Barnabas encouraged him in his ministry; and Timothy became like a son to him. Paul also knew the heartache of co-laborers turning away from him when times got tough ([2 Tim. 1:15](#)). We may experience something similar in our life.

People will have a variety of reactions to our struggles. Some feel inadequate and hold back because they are uncertain about what to say or do. Others are so protective of their time that selfishness causes them to turn away. And sometimes our friends and co-workers do not want to be identified with us in our trials. In my early days as a pastor, this happened to me when the church was going through a period of turmoil. Only two pastors reached out to me and offered support; the others stood back. This experience taught me the importance of reaching out to people in crisis.

Helping others requires an investment of time and energy. We start by praying for them and asking the Lord how we can help. He may have us lend emotional support, provide spiritual guidance, offer assistance in a physical or financial way, or find others who can.

Standing with people will encourage them.

When friends abandoned him, Paul asked God not to count their actions against them (4:16). He followed the example of Jesus, who prayed for the Father to forgive His persecutors. What's your response when friends let you down? Forgiveness is the choice that pleases God every time.

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Daily Devotional - The Promises of God

OCTOBER 23RD 2015 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional - The Promises of God

[Hebrews 10:22-23](#)

Our heavenly Father has made many promises in the Bible. But there is confusion about which verses we can claim as a definite commitment from God. Three questions are useful in evaluating whether divine promises apply to our own situation:

- 1. Is this promise limited to a specific person or circumstance, or does it apply to all believers? For example, the pledge made to Abraham and Sarah about giving birth to a child ([Gen. 18:10](#)) is restricted to them, whereas [Hebrews 13:5](#) contains a guarantee to all Christians that Jesus will be with them forever.*
- 2. Are we asking the Lord to meet a need or a desire? A need is something that we must have in order for God to complete His work in our lives. A desire is something we want for satisfaction or enjoyment. If we lose our job, then an essential—an incoming wage—is missing. But if we want a new position for personal reasons, it's a desire.*
- 3. Before fulfilling a promise, does the Lord require some action on our part? [Proverbs 3:5-6](#) is a conditional promise, which pledges God's direction on the basis of our trust in Him. On the other hand, Jesus' assurance of His presence with believers is unconditional ([Matt. 28:20](#)).*

By evaluating Scripture on the basis of these questions, we will know which promises apply to our situation. Think of how much more confidence we'll have in asking our Lord to fulfill them. For, as [2 Corinthians 1:20](#) (NIV) says, "No matter how many promises God has made, they are 'Yes' in Christ."

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