

**The Doctrine of Guilt**  
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## **Chapter 1**

### **Holy Spirit Conviction Versus Condemnation By Man**

Let us begin this study on the doctrine of guilt by analyzing a familiar passage from the Apostle Paul regarding the role of the Holy Spirit in the Church-Age believer's life.

PHI 2:1, "Since therefore there is encouragement in Christ, since there is comfort from virtue-love, since there is fellowship of the Spirit, since there are tendernesses and compassions,"

PHI 2:2, "Bring to completion my inner happiness [about your life] by thinking the same things, maintaining the same virtue-love, united in soul, concentrating on the same objective."

PHI 2:3, "Do nothing motivated by contentiousness or ambitious pride, but with humility of mind [by means of grace orientation] let each of you keep on considering one another as more important than himself;"

PHI 2:4, "Do not merely be regarding your own personal interests, but also for the personal interests of others."

PHI 2:5, "Keep on thinking this [doctrine] within yourselves which was also resident in Christ Jesus,"

PHI 2:6, "Who, although He preexisted in the essence of God, did not think equality with God a gain to be seized [held on to],"

PHI 2:7, "But He deprived Himself of the proper function of deity when He had received the form of a servant and was born in the likeness of men [but without an old sin nature]."

PHI 2:8, "In fact, although having being discovered in outward appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of spiritual death, that is, the death of the Cross."

PHI 2:9, "Therefore also the God has highly exalted Him to the maximum, and bestowed on Him the name or rank which is above every name,"

PHI 2:10, "So that at the name of Jesus EVERY KNEE WILL BOW, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth,"

PHI 2:11, "And that every tongue should acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, resulting in the glory of God the Father."

PHI 2:12, "So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, be accomplishing your own preservation with respect toward Christ and reverence toward doctrine;"

PHI 2:13, “For it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure.”

In verse 13, we begin with the explanatory use of the Greek conjunctive particle *gar* (“for”) which indicates the role of God the Holy Spirit Who is at work within you. This is something that many believers forget – that God is at work within them. The next word in this verse is the present active indicative of the Greek verb *eimi* which is *estin*, the verb “to be.” The present tense of *estin* is a static present representing a condition perpetually existing; it keeps on being or it always is.

The active voice indicates that God the Holy Spirit produces the action of the verb. The indicative mood is declarative, representing the verbal idea from the viewpoint of absolute dogmatic reality. And such reality is that the believer is supported and sustained by the ministry of the Holy Spirit.

The next phrase is the predicate nominative from the Greek noun *theos* which is *theou* and refers to the third person of the Trinity, God the Holy Spirit. God the Holy Spirit has the exact same divine essence as God the Father and God the Son. And, in context, this is a reference to God the Holy Spirit in His logistical grace support to the believer.

PHI 2:13, “For it is God [the Holy Spirit] who is at work in you,”

“Work” is the present active participle of the Greek verb *energeo* which is *energon*, meaning to be at work, to be effective, to operate, to accomplish, and to be in action. The present tense is a retroactive progressive present which denotes what began in the past at the point of your salvation and continues into the present time. God the Holy Spirit Who indwells each believer at salvation is the one Who is working in you. The active voice indicates that the indwelling Holy Spirit produces the action of the verb. The participle is circumstantial, which points to the logistics of the grace of God.

In Mark 6:14 and Matthew 14:2, *energeo* is used to describe the powers at work within the Lord Jesus Christ.

*Energeo* is used in Ephesians 1:20 for God operating through Jesus Christ to effect our salvation.

*Energeo* is used in Galatians 2:8 for God working within His people to effect His purpose and will.

GAL 2:8, “For He who effectually worked for Peter in his apostleship to the Circumcised effectually worked for me also to the Gentiles.”

In Colossians 1:29, *energeo* is used for God’s power mightily at work within us.

COL 1:29, “And for this purpose also I labor, striving according to His power, which mightily

works within me.”

The principle, then, is this – whether you realize it or not, God is working within you in some way.

In fact, God has to work within you or you will never have any meaningful changes in your life.

1TH 2:13, “And for this reason we also constantly thank God that when you received from us the Word of God’s message, you accepted it not as the word of men, but for what it really is, the Word of God, which also performs its work in you who believe.”

*Energeo* is also used for making one stable in Romans 16:25.

ROM 16:25, “Now to Him who is able to establish [stabilize] you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery doctrine which has been kept secret for long ages past,”

And this is how, in Ephesians 3:20, “God is able to do exceeding abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us.”

Now, verse 20 is a reference to the filling of the Holy Spirit, which is clearly involved in supplying the power, the wisdom, the concentration, and the academic discipline needed in the life of the believer. However, this verse is not just a reference to the filling of the Spirit; it indicates much more. For example, God is at work within us even when we are not filled with the Spirit. You must remember that if the Holy Spirit is not filling you or controlling your soul, He has the ministry of conviction towards you.

However, we must take care to note the difference between an attitude from the old sin nature and one from the new nature. Conviction from the Holy Spirit constitutes true guilt, but condemnation from the old sin nature is false guilt.

ROM 8:1, “There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.”

ROM 4:7, “Blessed are those whose lawless deeds have been forgiven, And whose sins have been covered.”

ROM 4:8, “Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord will not take into account.”

Now, all of us are confronted with some form of criticism; sometimes it is intense and outspoken and sometimes it is silent, but is no less painful for being so. We are all sensitive to it, even if we conceal this fact. No one likes to be criticized or rejected. Self-confident people are usually able to bear it more than others. Sometimes we respond in grace, sometimes we defend ourselves, and sometimes we trade criticism for criticism. However, we need to understand that God may be at work within us through this criticism or through this conviction. We need to identify true guilt

versus false guilt, or Holy Spirit conviction versus the condemnation of man. For example, Saul reproached Jonathan for his friendship with David and this was wrong. It was a false guilt with man-made condemnation.

1SA 20:27, “And it came about the next day, the second day of the new moon, that David’s place was empty; so Saul said to Jonathan his son, ‘Why has the son of Jesse not come to the meal, either yesterday or today?’”

In context, Saul wanted an opportunity to kill David.

1SA 20:28, “Jonathan then answered Saul, ‘David earnestly asked leave of me to go to Bethlehem.’”

1SA 20:29, “For he said, ‘Please let me go, since our family has a sacrifice in the city, and my brother has commanded me to attend. And now, if I have found favor in your sight, please let me get away that I may see my brothers.’ For this reason he has not come to the king’s table.”

1SA 20:30, “Then Saul’s anger burned against Jonathan and he said to him, ‘You son of a perverse, rebellious woman [all of a sudden Jonathan is just the mother’s son!] Do I not know that you are choosing the son of Jesse to your own shame and to the shame of your mother’s nakedness?’”

Now, many parents, out of social prejudice or from jealousy, make their children feel guilty in their friendships. The children are left with a choice between two types of guilt:

1. Guilt towards their parents if they are faithful to their friends.
2. Guilt towards their friends if they submit to the parents.

Or, the child resigns himself to keeping up the friendship secretly, which also has a burden of guilt that results from the deception. The point here is that guilt can be a devastating thing if it is not handled properly. Therefore, we all need to distinguish between conviction from the Holy Spirit and condemnation from men, for it may be God the Holy Spirit who is at work in you. Few parents welcome this awakening of individuality in their children. Many parents suggest to their children that it is wrong to like what their parents dislike, to desire what their parents do not endorse, or to behave in any manner that the parents do not commend.

And what do such parents quote to their children? “Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right” (EPH 6:1). Devout parents use this verse to demand submission from their children, even when they are no longer children. But these parents often ignore what Paul wrote next.

EPH 6:4, “And parents, do not provoke your children to anger; but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.”

COL 3:21, “Parents, do not exasperate your children, that they may not lose heart.”

By their behavior as much as by their words, many strict and stern parents even suggest that anything that gives pleasure is sinful. So, we see that guilt is often encountered at an early age. Many children have been brought up with guilt (usually false guilt) as a major factor in the home; therefore, they have great difficulty handling the convicting ministry of the Holy Spirit.

A friend recently said that he was brought up and inculcated with an inflexible epigram – “enjoyment prohibited.” As a consequence, he could not enjoy anything without feeling guilty. He was taught that pleasure had to be earned. Such a person becomes burdened with a responsibility that is too heavy – earning the right to have fun without feeling guilt.

Such a situation is clearly wrong according to Scripture. The greatest things in life are free! For example, salvation is a gift given freely by God (EPH 2:8). Unearned pleasures and undeserved gifts are the most appreciated.

The Bible speaks not only of the fact that salvation is a gift that is not earned, but it also speaks of all God’s gifts, the small ones as well as the great ones, as being a gift. Scripture reveals to us a heavenly Father who rejoices in His children’s happiness and is pleased to give them pleasure.

MAT 7:11, “If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your Father who is in heaven give what is good to those who ask Him!”

Now, this type of guilt is not only seen with parents towards their children, but also among siblings, even when they become adults. For an example, let us look at the story of Mary and Martha.

LUK 10:38, “Now as they were traveling along, He [Jesus] entered a certain village; and a woman named Martha welcomed Him into her home.”

LUK 10:39, “And she had a sister called Mary, who moreover was listening to the Lord’s word, seated at His feet.”

LUK 10:40, “But Martha was distracted with all her preparations; and she came up [to Him] and said, ‘Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to do all the serving alone? Then tell her to help me.’”

LUK 10:41, “But the Lord answered and said to her, ‘Martha, Martha, you are worried and bothered about so many things.’”

LUK 10:42, “But [only] a few things are necessary, really [only] one, for Mary has chosen the good part, which shall not be taken away from her.”

Mary and Martha were two sisters and two well-recognized types of individuals. One was of a

practical temperament who occupied herself about the house; the other had more inclination for the things of the Spirit and sat at the feet of Jesus to listen to Him for a while. Martha had been making a lot of noise with the dishes to let her sister know about her bad mood. And, ultimately, she could bear it no longer and appealed directly to the Lord Himself in Luke 10:40, “Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to do all the serving alone? Then tell her to help me.”

In this passage, we can easily see the part played by secret feelings of inferiority and, even, of guilt in Martha. Martha felt less confident than her sister in spiritual discussions and so took refuge in her dishes. Probably, she was ashamed of her petulance, but consoled herself by showing off her practical services and by criticizing her sister. However, our Lord lifted the discussion above these petty psychological mechanisms by raising the issue of values.

LUK 10:41, “Martha, Martha, you are worried and bothered about so many things.”

LUK 10:42, “But [only] a few things are necessary, really [only] one, for Mary has chosen the good part, which shall not be taken away from her.”

Now this statement does not imply any contempt on His part for housework, since Jesus even cooked for His friends (JOH 21:9). It simply means that we should not let someone use guilt to take us away from Bible doctrine. Often, we do not have such a good reason for delaying our personal duties, but a principle that is evident is that we are frequently bathed in an unhealthy atmosphere of criticism. And, many times, we are not even aware of the situation because it is so common. Such an atmosphere arouses feelings of guilt in both the critic and the one being criticized.

So, it is important to learn to differentiate between true guilt and false guilt, between the convicting ministry of the Holy Spirit Who is at work in the believer and condemnation from man. Therefore, let us notice certain principles about guilt.

1. Many parents use guilt as a method of disciplining and correcting their children.

Parents have to be careful how they raise their children; parents should not use guilt to manipulate their children.

2. Satan accuses God’s people to try to make them feel guilty (REV 12:10).

3. Sin can make a person feel so guilty that they hide from God (GEN 3:7-10).

4. Being too concerned about what others might think or say produces guilt (JOH 12:42-43).

5. Being a recipient of something you did not earn or do not deserve may (falsely) produce guilt.

Many people have a difficult time graciously receiving gifts!

6. Guilt may also engender an inability to say no. Many people will do anything that someone asks them to do because they feel guilty if they say no!
7. Some people experience guilt due to feelings of inadequacy or some type of inferiority complex (2CO 10:12).
8. Many people cannot accept their own weaknesses and this causes them to feel guilty about themselves (2CO 10:12).
9. It is possible to experience guilt not only from the evil that we do but from the good we neglect to do (JAM 4:17).

There is a certain guilt that comes from neglecting to do that which is considered to be right. Therefore, we need to understand the difference between true guilt (i.e. conviction by the Holy Spirit) and false guilt (i.e. condemnation by satanic accusation). For example, there is a legitimate guilt that all members of the human race face as a result of the divine judgment of God.

ROM 3:19, “Now we know that whatever the Law says, it speaks to those who are under the Law, that every mouth may be closed, and all the world may become guilty before God;”

God desires for the human race to experience this type of true guilt so that we will recognize our need for the Savior (1TI 2:4). However, this guilt is not for the believer; it is only for the unbeliever! Once an individual believes on the Lord Jesus Christ, guilt and condemnation are no longer an issue (ROM 8:1). Therefore, true or genuine guilt is meant to condemn the unbeliever and awaken him to the fact that he needs a Savior.

Now, many believers have a difficult time learning the difference between condemnation and conviction. There is a true guilt or a conviction that believers need to recognize. True guilt will always free us and produce rest, whereas false guilt will separate us from the Lord. And, if we confuse the two, we will end up feeling condemned even when under Holy Spirit conviction.

Conviction is simply the act of convincing a person of his error and preparing him to admit the truth about his condition so that he can rectify it through rebound and recovery. On the other hand, condemnation magnifies our sins and failures and pushes us toward a subtle works program with the goal of making up for those sins and failures. It is only through the guidance of God the Holy Spirit that wisdom is secured, enabling us to discern between legitimate guilt and illegitimate guilt. In many cases people will be used by the kingdom of darkness to put us under condemnation so that we will not pay attention to the conviction of the Holy Spirit. For example, look at Luke chapter 2.

LUK 2:40, “And the Child [Jesus Christ] continued to grow and become strong, increasing in wisdom; and the grace of God was upon Him.”



LUK 2:41, “And His parents used to go to Jerusalem every year at the Feast of the Passover.”

LUK 2:42, “And when He became twelve, they went up [there] according to the custom of the Feast;”

LUK 2:43, “And as they were returning, after spending the full number of days, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem. And His parents were unaware of it,”

LUK 2:44, “But supposed Him to be in the caravan [they traveled by huge caravans in the ancient world], and went a day’s journey; and they [began] looking for Him among their relatives and acquaintances.”

LUK 2:45, “And when they did not find Him, they returned to Jerusalem, looking for Him.”

LUK 2:46, “And it came about that after three days they found Him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, both listening to them, and asking them questions.”

LUK 2:47, “And all who heard Him were amazed at His understanding and His answers.”

LUK 2:48, “And when they saw Him, they were astonished; and His mother said to Him, ‘Son, why have You treated us this way? Behold, Your father and I have been anxiously looking for You.’”

LUK 2:49, “And He said to them, ‘Why is it that you were looking for Me? Did you not know that I had to be in My Father’s [house]?’”

LUK 2:50, “And they did not understand the statement which He had made to them.”

Now, in verse 48, the mother of Jesus tried to place Him under false guilt when she said, “Son, why have you treated us this way?” She was trying to make Jesus feel guilty about causing his mother and earthly father to worry. And what was our Lord’s response? He discerned that this was illegitimate guilt directed toward Him to produce condemnation. And so He said to them in Luke 2:49, “Why is it that you were looking for Me? Did you not know that I had to be in My Father’s [house]?”

So, a principle emerges – the conviction that the Lord Jesus Christ had from His heavenly Father was greater than the condemnation directed toward Him by His earthly mother.

Therefore, He was executing His Father’s will or living the spiritual life which delivered Him from any guilt and condemnation from others. So he said, “Why is it that you were looking for Me? Did you not know that I had to be in My Father’s [house]?”

If the boy Jesus had let guilt manipulate Him, He would have forsaken the divine will of God. Guilt would have come into His life, but being impeccable, He never once left the perfect will of

His Father. This is a perfect illustration of why we must be careful in our evaluations and criticisms of others. In this passage, we see a 12-year-old boy Who will grow up and teach us to honor our mother and father, yet what He did causes His mother and earthly father to worry about His whereabouts. Why? Because there was a higher law at stake – obedience to His heavenly Father! Mary and Joseph were both worried, yet this did not provoke Jesus to say, “Sorry, mom, I shouldn’t have done it.” But rather, He confidently stated, “Did you not know that I had to be in My Father’s [house]?”

It was more important to Him to pay attention to His conviction from God rather than condemnation from man. And that should be true about your life! It is more important that you pay attention to your convictions from God than to condemnations from others. There will always be those in your life who make such accusations. There will always be the Martha-type person criticizing Mary for laying aside the details of life in order to hear the Word of God. They will make such statements as:

“You are not a good mother. You always leave your children to go to Bible class.”

“You are not a good wife. You are so wrapped up in Christ you neglect your husband and family.”

“You are not a good husband...”

“You are not a good father...”

“You are not a good friend...”

“You are always involved with this Christian stuff, involved in that cult, etc.!”

All of these satanic accusations promote false guilt, but the conviction of the Holy Spirit leads us to be concerned with our heavenly Father’s business. So, the believer must become secure and confident in his relationship with God to be able to resist false guilt.

When false accusations are made against the believer to produce guilt concerning his commitment to the Lord and his postponing of the details of life to study doctrine, the believer must be secure in his love toward God so that these accusations do not result in condemnation and illegitimate guilt. A believer’s love towards God will result in the proper priority of putting the spiritual before the temporal.

The believer who resides in God’s will and plan for his life will realize the principle of “Who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is He who died, yes, rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us” (ROM 8:34). And this is the correct answer to anyone who tries to put a believer on a guilt trip! The only guilt the believer should experience is the conviction that comes from God the Holy Spirit, a conviction meant to correct the believer and restore the believer’s inner happiness through rebound and recovery. Therefore, true guilt from above is actually conviction from the Holy Spirit and will produce freedom without condemnation. Truth will free us (JOH 8:32); it does not condemn us (ROM 8:1)!

Part of Satan's policy is to put us on a guilt trip so that, when a believer confronts Godly conviction, the believer will be confused about what is conviction (legitimate guilt) and what is condemnation (illegitimate guilt). And only doctrine in a believer's soul will give the believer the ability to spiritually discern when God is correcting and when Satan is accusing. So, ignorance of Bible doctrine and lack of spirituality will result in confusion regarding legitimate guilt and illegitimate guilt (1CO 2:14).

1CO 2:14, "But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised."

Now, people seem to enjoy criticizing and correcting everyone but themselves! This tendency is one of the results of the fall – the natural man (the old sin nature) emerged and he is not able to discern spiritual issues; they are foolishness to him. This means that none of us have the ability to evaluate situations correctly unless we have the guidance and direction of the Holy Spirit. We need God's wisdom and God's viewpoint. Otherwise, we will pass judgment upon others and condemn them.

We do not possess God's omniscience nor do we possess His omnipresence, so we must be careful that we do not set ourselves up as the final judge in the lives of others; that is the position of Christ and Christ alone!

For instance, a husband may think that he is more intelligent than his wife and he may become critical and judgmental concerning her actions, not realizing he has no right to do so. The wife may do the same thing! Lovers do it to each other. Friends do it to one another. Our suggestions and comments must be carefully thought out so that they do not produce false guilt in the lives of others.

COL 4:6, "Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned, as it were, with salt, so that you may know how you should respond to each person."

Why do we have so many "judges" in the church today? Why do we have so many "spiritual policemen" or "spiritual private detectives?" Why are there so many who set themselves up as "gods?" The answer is that these are natural-minded individuals who have fallen into the satanic trap of Genesis chapter 3, thinking that they know good and evil. When Satan tempted Adam and the woman in the garden, he told them that they would be "as God knowing the difference between good and evil." This, of course, was a lie and is still a lie today.

The natural-minded man does not possess the ability to pass judgment, yet he does so anyway and ends up making an evaluation without having all the facts! As the Lord indicated to Job in Job 40:8, such a person condemns others so that he may appear more righteous in comparison. This is a common trend in the natural man, arising from his old sin nature. So, we must practice caution about judging or criticizing others; such criticism may produce guilt in the ones we love. In addition, not only will such action result in guilt in others, but it will also bring condemnation upon the critic (LUK 6:37).

A principle emerges – we will never mature until we are able to receive correction, but we will not be able to receive correction if we are plagued with guilt.

So, how can we discern between Holy Spirit conviction (legitimate guilt) and condemnation (illegitimate guilt)? The answer is found in 1John 5:20-21.

1JO 5:20, “And we know that the Son of God has come, and has given us understanding, in order that we might know Him who is true, and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life.”

1JO 5:21, “Little children, guard yourselves from idols.”

This passage indicates that, if there is an area in our lives where God is not preeminent, that particular area will be filled with guilt and condemnation. This is why we need to guard ourselves from idols. An idol is anything that we put before God, separating us from God. And if God is not in control of our lives, Satan is – there is no in-between, it is one or the other. So the reason we experience guilt and condemnation is that there are specific areas in our lives where we actually have another “god.” This “god” imparts human-viewpoint thinking derived from Satan’s cosmic system, the world!

So, if you do experience guilt and condemnation, do not merely dismiss it as a satanic attack. You might be experiencing legitimate guilt concerning the fact that you have “another god” before the Lord. For example, if you are condemned about your attitude toward materialism, perhaps you harbor the god of materialism before the Lord. Or, if you are condemned about a certain sin, it may be because that sin has now become a god in your life!

Divine viewpoint teaches us to discern when God is convicting us and when our own guilt, from satanic accusation, is condemning us. God wants to strengthen your personal relationship with Him in order that you may become spiritually self-sustained. And proper discernment resulting in spiritual self-sustainment can only come through perception, metabolization, and application of Bible doctrine on a daily basis! It is only through the guidance of God the Holy Spirit that wisdom is secured, enabling us to discern between legitimate guilt and illegitimate guilt. Can you imagine the guilt that many would put the Lord under if He were alive today?

MAT 12:46, “While He was still speaking to the multitudes, behold, His mother and brothers were standing outside, seeking to speak to Him.”

MAT 12:47. “And someone said to Him, ‘Behold, Your mother and Your brothers are standing outside seeking to speak to You.’”

MAT 12:48, “But He answered the one who was telling Him and said, ‘Who is My mother and who are My brothers?’”

MAT 12:49, “And stretching out His hand toward His disciples, He said, ‘Behold, My mother and My brothers!’”

MAT 12:50, “For whoever does the will of My Father who is in heaven, he is My brother and sister and mother.”

Notice that Jesus did not feel guilty about having made this statement. No doubt, there were those who were in the crowd who thought this to be quite unkind, and if the Lord would have read their minds, He would have discovered accusations of condemnation. However, these accusations were made by individuals who did not have enough spiritual discernment to recognize that the true family of God consists of those who hear the Word of God and keep it!

Our Lord never felt guilty about making statements of TRUTH. The conviction from above to do the Father’s will was much greater than the issue of offending others. Whenever a believer takes a firm stand against evil, he will inevitably be the object of criticism. So, your family, genetic heritage, or childhood should never be an excuse for the way you are or a rationalization for personal failure.

PHI 3:13, “Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it [the spiritual life in totality] yet; but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind [anything in your past that may be latent into your subconscious; you may have even forgotten about it, but it still has some type of influence upon you] and reaching forward to what lies ahead [the spiritual life with all of its blessings],”

PHI 3:14, “I press on toward the goal or the objective for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus [your very own spiritual life].”

PHI 3:15, “Let us therefore, as many as are mature, have this attitude; and if in anything you have a different attitude, God will reveal that also to you.”

How will God reveal your attitude? Through the teaching of the Word of God.

Even if you had a difficult childhood, sooner or later you are going to have to move on with your life. So, you failed in some facet of your life? Sooner or later you are going to have to move on. And you must move on with your spiritual life; you cannot move on without it! Do not be distracted by past failures; instead, learn from them. Do not attempt to blame others for them. Our spiritual life teaches us how to live in the light of eternity. Our spiritual life instructs us to forget the past and move toward the high ground of spiritual maturity.

So, a principle emerges – past failures must never become present handicaps.

It is imperative that all believers learn how to handle their past, including how to handle that great villain called guilt. So guilt is an inescapable fact of human existence, one that has tormented us throughout the ages. Today, many people, both believers and unbelievers, spend their lives feeling guilty about their failures. And this is why the Bible differentiates between

legitimate guilt, which is the Holy Spirit's conviction designed to bring us closer to God, and false guilt, which Satan uses to separate us from God.

Many believers are obsessed with their own guilt and their own inferiority complexes. And this obsession with self keeps us far away from living the spiritual life that God has provided. Now, in eternity past, God provided His solution for our guilt, and that solution is GRACE! Scripture after scripture reveals that our Lord died to free us not only from sin, but also from the effects of sin, like guilt. David understood this principle.

PSA 32:5, "I acknowledged my sin to Thee, And my iniquity I did not hide; I said, 'I will confess my transgressions to the Lord;' And Thou didst forgive the guilt of my sin. Selah."

In the spiritual life, the Son is the issue, not sin and guilt. And Jesus Christ is the only One who can wipe away our guilt because He is the One Who died for it. Therefore, the essential element for living in freedom from guilt is understanding grace! This is why we need Bible doctrine to live in the freedom God has already provided, avoiding satanic traps and pseudo-solutions for guilt.

So, one of the major issues that keeps an individual from living the spiritual life that God has provided for him is the problem of guilt. Guilt torments people throughout their lives. This is why we need to use wisdom in communicating to our children.

EPH 4:29, "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers."

The statements that we make to one another have a powerful impact. In Proverbs 18:21, Solomon observed that "death and life are in the power of the tongue." Just a little statement like "I can't believe that you, of all people, did that" can be devastating. Such statements are made daily to people that we love. In fact, insecurity, inferiority, and emotional breakdown in the soul can all be traced back to a subtle form of guilt.

And no one knows the power of guilt better than the devil himself. In Revelation 12:10, Satan is called "the accuser of our brethren who accuses Christians day and night!" Now, why does Satan make accusations against the believer constantly? He does it so that guilt will ensue and cause the believer to separate from the Lord. Guilt separates us from God! Many Christians have become wearied and worn out because of the tremendous guilt the kingdom of darkness has foisted upon them (DAN 7:25). And this is why the believer must understand two doctrines, the doctrine of justification as well as the doctrine of eternal security.

If we do not realize that God's justice and righteousness are completely satisfied by Christ's finished work and that our relationship with Him is based upon the accomplishments of the Cross, then guilt will torment us until it drives us from the presence of the Lord. While it is true that our relationship with the Lord can never be changed, our fellowship with Him can be hindered by guilt.

When a believer lacks confidence in the spiritual realm, satanic accusations will interfere and interrupt the believer's spiritual progress. The guilt that results from Satan's accusations frustrates the believer and separates him from the Lord. Moreover, guilt produces doubt in our relationships. Suddenly the believer "feels" rejected by the Lord. These feelings are not according to truth but are the result of the false guilt that ensued from such accusations.

ROM 14:23, "He who doubts is condemned and whatever is not from faith is sin."

So, a principle emerges – false guilt hinders our relationship with God. For instance, there are many who believe that God is angry with them for something that they have done. This type of thinking is simply the result of either the believer's ignorance of Bible doctrine or the believer's failure to believe the doctrine that he has already been taught. God's relationship with us is not based upon what we do; God's relationship with us is based upon what Jesus Christ accomplished on the Cross. Unfortunately, this is not the viewpoint of the average believer. The average believer thinks that if they are living right, God is happy with them, but if they fail, God becomes angry. But in reality, God never changes. He is immutable.

MAL 3:6, "For I, the Lord, do not change; therefore you, O sons of Jacob [swindlers, liars, deceivers], are not consumed."

ISA 54:5, "And also the Glory of Israel will not lie or change His mind; for He is not a man that He should change His mind."

We are the ones who change towards God; He does not change towards us. And the point is that God loves the carnal believer just as much as He loves the mature believer. He will discipline the carnal believer if the believer remains in carnality, but even divine discipline is an expression of His unconditional love (HEB 12:6,10).

HEB 12:6, "For those whom the Lord loves He disciplines, And He scourges every son whom He receives."

The preponderance of guilt in myriad believers' lives blinds them from this truth about God's love for them.

PSA 103:10, "He has not dealt with us according to our sins, Nor rewarded us according to our iniquities."

1PE 2:24, "And He Himself bore our sins in His body on the Cross, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed."

So, beware of the situations and circumstances in life that produce guilt. The spiritual life demands that you look forward and not backward, especially if you are tormented by guilt related to your past (PHI 3:13). All believers need to learn how to handle their past, including how to handle that great villain called guilt. Guilt can torment people throughout their lives.

Genesis chapter 3 is the first biblical account of guilt. After Adam and the woman ate from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, they immediately tried to hide their guilt and shame.

GEN 3:7, “Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loin coverings.”

GEN 3:8, “And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden.”

GEN 3:9, “Then the Lord God called to the man, and said to him, ‘Where are you [why are you where you are]?’”

GEN 3:10, “And he [Adam] said, ‘I heard the sound of Thee in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so, I hid myself.’”

As a result of this act of disobedience, man became spiritually dead and sin entered into the human race. And along with sin came guilt! Sin produced guilt in both Adam and the woman. This guilt produced an inward shame that caused both of them to hide from the Lord. Guilt and shame cause individuals to hide from God, to separate from the Lord. But God is the only one Who can deliver us from our guilt because He, in grace, delivers us from ourselves.

That guilt drives us from the presence of God is a great problem. When a person fails, the natural result is for him to feel guilty. And guilt produces fear and shame and causes him to hide from the very One that can give him victory over his guilt. When a believer realizes that God is not angry with him and that because of God’s omniscience there is not a decision we could ever make that would shock God, then the believer is ready to continue living the spiritual life.

It is only as we understand the doctrine of grace and recognize the wonderful results of the finished work of our Lord Jesus Christ on the Cross that we will be able to rid ourselves of guilt. Many sincere believers actually believe that their failures can fundamentally change their relationship with God when, in fact, it can never be changed. And it bears repeating – the Lord knows of every failure, every mistake, and every sin you will ever commit. Therefore, the real problem that believers face is not sin but what to do with the guilt that arises from sin. Adam and the woman hid themselves from God due to guilt! They were filled with guilt and shame even though they became “religious” and performed an act of human good by clothing themselves.

GEN 3:7b, “And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves aprons.”

The act of trying to cover their nakedness signified their attempt to please God through human good. Religion is man trying to please God by what man does. And many people become religious in an attempt to appease their guilt. But religion is not the spiritual life. Instead, a guilty believer should rebound (confess known sin to God, 1JO 1:9), recover through inculcation of Bible doctrine, and rely on the grace of God.



## **Chapter 2**

### **Fearing What Others Think**

There is another problem that guilt produces – concern about what others think or say. Such concern about one’s reputation can also hinder a relationship with God and stop a believer from living the spiritual life. And when you find yourself so concerned about what others are saying, the fear of failure and the guilt of disappointing others will drive you crazy. As a result, you will let yourself be drawn to subtle works programs, trying to please everyone around you.

However, the Lord Jesus Christ never worried about His reputation. He did not concern himself with what people might say or what they might think because He knew the nature of man.

JOH 2:23, “Now when He was in Jerusalem at the Passover, during the feast, many believed in His name, beholding His signs which He was doing.”

JOH 2:24, “But Jesus, on His part, was not entrusting Himself to them, for He knew all men,”

JOH 2:25, “And because He did not need anyone to bear witness concerning man for He Himself knew what was in man.”

The Lord knew what was in the hearts of men. He knew that one day you could be their king and the next day their slave! One day they would be madly in love with you and the next day they would hurt you. If you become concerned about what others might think, the guilt of disappointing them will cause you tremendous pain. And you will have become a pleaser of men instead of a pleaser of God (JOH 12:43, GAL 1:10). Such an attitude is termed “social guilt” and is often subtle – being nice to everyone, always wanting to be liked by everyone, and striving for attention.

JOH 12:42, “Nevertheless many even of the rulers believed in Him, but because of the Pharisees they were not confessing [Him], lest they should be put out of the synagogue;”

JOH 12:43, “For they loved the approval of men rather than the approval of God.”

When you realize that your reputation does not matter as much as your relationship with God, you will be delivered from being a people-pleaser. Instead of being motivated by a guilty conscience to do things for people, you will be able to operate under the biblical principle of freedom (GAL 5:1). And you will experience what it means to be set free and to give, not of necessity, but willingly. There is a tremendous difference between giving motivated by guilt and giving through grace. Under grace you will discover the blessing of Acts 20:35 – “It is more blessed to give than to receive.” Often it is guilt which motivates people to give. Guilt-ridden people will do penance and they will attempt to make it up to God for their mistakes. They may give gifts out of guilt motivation or, like Adam and the woman in the garden, they may attempt acts of human good which are, in reality, dead works.

Then, there are believers who make vows to God because of guilt. These may be vows “to never do it again” or vows to “make it up to God.” Thus, guilt can put us on a subtle works program in an attempt to pay for what we have done. Both vows are blasphemy. Often a believer commits the same act again the very same day. And to attempt to pay for what we have done is an act which denies the finished work of Jesus Christ on the Cross (JOH 19:30). So, you should never let guilt motivate you to pay for what you have done; Jesus Christ has paid the penalty for all your sins on the Cross (1JO 2:2).

Instead of reacting to guilt, you should allow the peace of God to calm your soul and give you the ability to appreciate life.

PHI 4:6, “Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.”

PHI 4:7, “And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, shall guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”

PHI 4:8, “Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, let your mind dwell on these things.”

JOH 14:27, “Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives, do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful.”

JOH 16:33, “These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world.”

At times of unrest and uneasiness in this world we often rediscover the inward peace that we need so much. When we look at the gospel accounts, we see that the Lord Jesus Christ, whose responsibilities were far greater than ours, was not so burdened and not so rushed as we are. He made time to speak to the Samaritan woman whom He met at a well (JOH 4:1-26). He had time to spend holidays with His disciples. He had time to admire the lilies of the field (MAT 6:28). He had time to admire a sunset (MAT 16:2). He had time to wash His disciples’ feet (JOH 13:5). He had time to answer their naive questions patiently (JOH 15:5-10). Most importantly, He had time to go into the desert to pray (LUK 5:16). But if a believer does not rest in the peace of God, guilt can drive him to extremes. For example, recall what happened to Peter just before the Cross.

MAT 26:31, “Then Jesus said to them, ‘You will all fall away because of Me this night, for it is written, I will strike down the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered.’”

MAT 26:32, “But after I have been raised, I will go before you to Galilee.”

MAT 26:33, “But Peter answered and said to Him, ‘[Even] though all may fall away because of You, I will never fall away.’”

MAT 26:34, “Jesus said to him, ‘Truly I say to you that this [very] night, before a cock crows, you shall deny Me three times.’”

MAT 26:35, “Peter said to Him, ‘Even if I have to die with You, I will not deny You.’ All the disciples said the same thing too.”

MAT 26:69, “Now Peter was sitting outside in the courtyard, and a certain servant-girl came to him and said, ‘You too were with Jesus the Galilean.’”

MAT 26:70, “But he denied [it] before them all, saying, ‘I do not know what you are talking about.’”

MAT 26:71, “And when he had gone out to the gateway, another [servant-girl] saw him and said to those who were there, ‘This man was with Jesus of Nazareth.’”

MAT 26:72, “And again he denied [it] with an oath, ‘I do not know the man.’”

MAT 26:73, “And a little later the bystanders came up and said to Peter, ‘Surely you too are [one] of them; for the way you talk gives you away.’”

MAT 26:74, “Then he began to curse and swear, ‘I do not know the man!’ And immediately a cock crowed.”

MAT 26:75, “And Peter remembered the word which Jesus had said, ‘Before a cock crows, you will deny Me three times.’ And he went out and wept bitterly.”

Peter, when the cock crowed, suddenly became fully aware of the guilt of his denial when it was too late. And so, he went out and wept bitterly. Such guilt is, in fact, a condition in which we all live. We are all continually under the threat of some cock-crow which will lead us into guilt, shame, or embarrassment. Such a condition creates an environment of anxiety. And, in this anxiety, there is also a fear of being guilty without knowing it, which can make life even more painful. These factors related to guilt are why we need a working knowledge of Bible doctrine to understand and live in the freedom God has already provided.

GAL 5:1, “It was for freedom that Christ set us free; therefore, keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery.”

The yoke of slavery in Galatians chapter 5 is the legalism and self-righteousness which produces guilt in believers today. This slavery is a result of guilt manipulation by people who want to control others. And so the essential element for living in freedom from guilt is understanding grace. Believers need to learn to live in the freedom God has already provided.

GAL 5:13, “For you were called to freedom, brethren; only do not turn your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh,”

Freedom and liberty demand personal responsibility. If you take your freedom and live in the lust of the flesh, whether in moral or immoral degeneracy, guilt and condemnation will result.

JOH 8:32, “And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”

Only Bible doctrine metabolized in the right lobe of the soul will free the believer from guilt and condemnation.

PSA 119:45, “And I will walk at liberty, for I seek Thy precepts.”

2CO 3:17, “Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.”

Liberty and freedom are designed to protect you from guilt and condemnation. But there will always be attacks by the kingdom of darkness on the believer who lives in true liberty and freedom.

GAL 2:4, “But it was because of the false brethren who had sneaked in to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, in order to bring us into bondage.”

This verse is a warning to avoid satanic traps and pseudo-solutions for guilt. And one way to avoid falling into satanic traps is to avoid comparing yourself with others.

2CO 10:12, “For we dare not make ourselves of the number, or compare ourselves with some that commend themselves; but they, measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise.”

It is not wise to compare ourselves with others or compete with others. If we do, a personality conflict is likely to ensue. Comparison and competition with others often produce feelings of guilt and inadequacy in a person’s life. When a believer lacks confidence in the spiritual realm, satanic accusations will interfere and interrupt the believer’s spiritual progress. The guilt that arises from such accusations frustrates the believer and separates him from the Lord.

Guilt-ridden believers often think that the Lord cannot wait to discipline them and make them pay for what they have done. Some believers are so self-righteous and legalistic that they teach that the wrath of God will come down on you if you do not “watch out!” Such teaching makes God a liar! The one teaching such blasphemy is a liar. In fact, he is living a lie.

JOH 3:36, “He who believes the Son has eternal life, he who does not believe the wrath of God abides on him.”

ROM 5:9, “Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him.”

1TH 1:10, “He delivers us from the wrath to come.”

1TH 5:9, “For God has not appointed us unto wrath.”

So, there are many who believe that God is angry with them for something that they have done. This type of false thinking is simply the result of either the believer’s ignorance of Bible doctrine or the believer’s failure to believe the doctrine that has already been taught. But, in truth, God’s relationship with us is not based upon what we do; God’s relationship with us is based upon what Jesus Christ accomplished on the Cross. But, “they” say, “God is going to get you, brother; the Son will judge you, sister!”

JOH 5:22, “For not even the Father judges anyone, but He has given all judgment to the Son.”

JOH 5:27, “And He [the Father] gave Him [Jesus Christ] authority to execute judgment because He is the Son of man.”

But, in reality, when the Lord Jesus Christ walked the face of the earth, He would not judge anyone!

JOH 8:15, “You people judge according to the flesh [old sin nature]; I am not judging anyone.”

JOH 12:47, “And if anyone hears my sayings, and does not keep them, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world, but to save the world.”

Since making God a “boogie-man” will not work, “they” say, “People will get you for your actions!”

ROM 8:33, “Who will bring accusation against God’s elect?”

The answer is very simple – nobody, because “God is the one who justifies.”

ROM 8:34, “Who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is He who died.”

Now, the average believer lives in guilt and believes that God is going to judge him and punish him for what he has done or failed to do. The average believer thinks that, if he is living right, God is happy with him, but if he fails, God becomes angry with him. But, in reality, God never changes; He is immutable (MAL 3:6). We are the ones who change towards Him. He does not change towards us. God loves the carnal believer just as much as the mature believer. So, the average believer is wrong about God’s wrath. Instead, the Lord came to liberate us and free us from guilt, bondage, legalism, manipulation, shame, prison, and slavery.

ISA 61:1, “The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me, because the Lord has anointed Me to bring good news to the afflicted; He has sent Me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to captives, and freedom to prisoners;”

Notice two important words in verse 1 – liberty and freedom. Furthermore, notice two words that are not there – legalism and bondage.

JER 15:11, “The Lord said, ‘Surely I will set you free for purposes of good;’”

Again, beware of the situations and circumstances in life that produce guilt. Guilt can motivate the believer to perform many foolish acts. For instance, in Genesis chapter 32, we have a biblical example of an individual who tried to buy his way out of guilt. In Genesis chapter 32, Jacob heard that Esau, his brother, was coming for a visit. Jacob had wronged his brother Esau, in part by stealing Esau’s birthright. Jacob believed that Esau was on his way to exact revenge on Jacob.

GEN 32:3, “Then Jacob sent messengers before him to his brother Esau in the land of Seir, the country of Edom.”

GEN 32:4, “He also commanded them saying, ‘Thus you shall say to my lord Esau: Thus says your servant Jacob, I have sojourned with Laban, and stayed until now;’”

GEN 32:5, “And I have oxen and donkeys and flocks and male and female servants; and I have sent to tell my lord, that I may find favor in your sight.”

GEN 32:6, “And the messengers returned to Jacob, saying, ‘We came to your brother Esau, and furthermore he is coming to meet you, and four hundred men are with him.’”

GEN 32:7, “Then Jacob was greatly afraid and distressed; and he divided the people who were with him, and the flocks and the herds and the camels, into two companies;”

GEN 32:8, “For he said, ‘If Esau comes to the one company and attacks it, then the company which is left will escape.’”

GEN 32:9, “And Jacob said, ‘O God of my father Abraham and God of my father Isaac, O Lord, who didst say to me, Return to your country and to your relatives, and I will prosper you,’”

GEN 32:10, “I am unworthy of all the lovingkindness and of all the faithfulness which Thou hast shown to Thy servant; for with my staff only I crossed this Jordan, and now I have become two companies.”

GEN 32:11, “Deliver me, I pray, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau; for I fear him, lest he come and attack me, the mothers with the children.”

GEN 32:12, “For Thou didst say, ‘I will surely prosper you, and make your descendants as the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered for multitude.’”

GEN 32:13, “So he spent the night there. Then he selected from what he had with him a present for his brother Esau:”

GEN 32:14, “Two hundred female goats and twenty male goats, two hundred ewes and twenty rams,”

GEN 32:15, “Thirty milking camels and their colts, forty cows and ten bulls, twenty female donkeys and ten male donkeys.”

GEN 32:16, “And he delivered them into the hand of his servants, every drove by itself, and said to his servants, ‘Pass on before me, and put a space between droves.’”

GEN 32:17, “And he commanded the one in front, saying, ‘When my brother Esau meets you and asks you, saying, To whom do you belong, and where are you going, and to whom do these animals in front of you belong?’”

GEN 32:18, “Then you shall say, ‘These belong to your servant Jacob; it is a present sent to my lord Esau. And behold, he also is behind us.’”

GEN 32:19, “Then he commanded also the second and the third, and all those who followed the droves, saying, ‘After this manner you shall speak to Esau when you find him;’”

GEN 32:20, “And you shall say, ‘Behold, your servant Jacob also is behind us.’ For he said, ‘I will appease him with the present that goes before me. Then afterward I will see his face; perhaps he will accept me.’”

So, Jacob’s guilt from wronging his brother motivated Jacob to send presents to Esau. Likewise, many believers try to buy their way out of their guilt instead of bringing the situation to the light and dealing with the situation properly. But we should not let guilt motivate us to pay for what we have done because Jesus Christ paid the penalty for all of our sins on the Cross (1JO 2:2).

Remember that Satan’s kingdom of darkness has an organized plan to accuse the believer constantly. Satan knows that, if he can accuse the believer, the guilt from the accusations will distract the believer from the Predesigned Plan of God and, often, put the believer on a path to a subtle works program. And here is an interesting point – the works program will continue to separate the believer from God, because God will not accept anything that our flesh produces.

PSA 39:5b, “Every man at his best state is altogether vanity.”

The best that we can produce in the energy of the flesh is nothing more than vanity. Our human best is hollow and useless.

ISA 64:6a, “But we are all as an unclean thing and all our righteousness are as filthy [menstrual] rags.”

Our human self-righteousness is as repugnant to God as a bloody tampon is to us!

ROM 8:8, “So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.”

In this verse, the word flesh refers to our entire human nature and being. Man, in and of himself, cannot please God. Our relative righteousness cannot begin to compare with the absolute righteousness of God.

So, a principle emerges – believers who have sinned should not attempt to “make it up to God” because they feel guilty.

Instead, the Lord desires for a believer who has sinned to privately name or cite the sin to God (1JO 1:9). And, instead of feeling guilty about the sin, God desires that we forget about the past (PHI 3:13) and move forward in the plan of God (PHI 3:14). Jesus Christ, on the Cross, paid for all believers’ sins and guilt. God’s plan is for the believer to go forward in the spiritual life.

So, stop trying to make up for your mistakes. Guilt will (falsely) motivate the believer to participate in subtle works programs or to (falsely) make vows or commitments of sacrifice. Guilt incites such statements as “I’ll never go there again,” “I’ll never do that again,” “I’m going to listen to more Bible lessons,” “I’m going to read more books,” “I’m going to pray more,” “I’m going to give more,” etc. Many of these actions may be good, but guilt, as a motivation, is wrong. Remember, your motivation for your actions matters to God (MAT 6:1-5).

So, if guilt-motivated sacrifice is the wrong action, what are we to do when faced with guilt?

ISA 15:22, “To obey is better than to sacrifice.”

Now, do we obey? For instance, do we realize the truth of Romans 8:1.

ROM 8:1, “There is therefore now no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus.”

Do we obey verses such as Philippians 4:6?

PHI 4:6, “Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.”

So when Jesus Christ died for our sins, He also made a way for us to be totally free from the effects of sin, including guilt. He not only died for you, but he delivered you from that great enemy, guilt. Many understand that Jesus died for their sins; however, they do not understand that He also died for their guilt. This means that, if you fail, you do not have to be plagued with guilt. Instead, the grace of God teaches us to deny ungodliness and worldly lust.

TIT 2:11, “For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men.”

TIT 2:12, “Instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age,”



Notice that grace instructs us; it instructs us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires. “Ungodliness” is the Greek word *asebeia*. *Asebeia* is the opposite of *eusebeia*, which means dedication and devotion to the Predesigned Plan of God. “Worldly desire” refers to control by the old sin nature. And “to live sensibly” means to live with a sound mind or a mind filled with Bible doctrine. “To live righteously” refers to living in the perfect righteousness which God has freely given to you. “To live godly” means to live in the character and integrity which God has made available to you.

So, you should not attempt a works program like Jacob did, trying to buy your way back into favor with God. If you have done something wrong against someone, go to God alone and confess it. Remember what David stated in Psalm 51:4?

PSA 51:4, “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.”

If you need to go to the person also, go to him alone, but this is not necessary in most cases.

MAT 18:15, “And if your brother sins [against you] go and reprove him in private; if he listens to you, you have won your brother.”

Put your guilt aside and do not let it control you. Many people cannot enjoy even a small pleasure because of guilt. They think they do not deserve it because of past deeds. I have discovered that many believers have a difficult time accepting the blessings of grace from God. The reason they struggle is because of their guilt. Their guilt says they do not deserve it. And they are right – they do not deserve it. But, that is the very definition of grace: unmerited favor or an undeserved gift! As children of God, we are the recipients of His grace in a very special way.

God cannot accept our personal talent. God cannot accept our human ability. God cannot accept our personality. God cannot accept anything our flesh produces. In God’s plan, God must give and we must be the recipients. And one of the most difficult things in the world is to be the recipient of something you did not earn or do not deserve.

So, a principle emerges – grace makes it impossible for the recipient to take credit for the blessing. At no time can you stand back and say, “I did it,” “I earned it,” or “I deserved it,” “I built it,” or “I made it.” Grace totally destroys our pride because we cannot take credit for what we receive. This is why we often feel strange when people try to give us things. And guilt makes it even more difficult to receive grace blessings; guilt makes us feel like we must deserve the blessing. But, the Lord desires to bless us. He wants to give us gifts. He wants to love us. And the truth is that we will never deserve His blessings, His gifts, or His love. But we should not let guilt deprive us from enjoying the benefits of God.

PSA 103:2, “Bless the Lord, o my soul, and forget not all His benefits.”

There are times when we experience tremendous blessings from God. And many times, these

blessing come even though we have failed. Why? The answer is simple – if God only blessed us when things were going smoothly, then we would think the blessing was due to what we have done! We would reject the concept of grace and become like the Pharisees.

A Pharisee fasted twice a week. He went to church three times a day. He paid tithes and offerings from all that he had. He really had his act together, or so he thought... Yet, God did not bless him. Why? Because his motivation was wrong; he was not oriented to grace. And, much like a Pharisee, guilt falsely motivates us to produce dead works and deprives us of grace blessings from the Lord. Let us examine a familiar passage involving the Pharisees in John chapter 8.

This passage describes a woman caught in the very act of adultery. She did not have letters written against her nor was she the victim of hearsay; she was caught in the very act of sin.

JOH 8:3, “And the scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman caught in the act of adultery, and having set her in the midst,”

Note that the scribes and Pharisees were the religious leaders of the Jews during the dispensation of the Hypostatic Union (Jesus Christ on earth as a man). And only the scribes and Pharisees are mentioned because they represent self-righteous, arrogant individuals. This fact is brought out by the phrase “woe unto you scribes, Pharisees, hypocrites,” which is repeated several times in Matthew chapter 23. So the scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman caught in the act of adultery and made her stand in front of the crowd our Lord was teaching.

JOH 8:4, “And they said to Him, ‘Teacher, this woman has been caught in adultery, in the very act.’”

So these “moral,” “religious” leaders have nothing better to do than to stick their noses into other people’s business! Have you ever wondered what happened to her partner? Was not the partner just as guilty? Or, perhaps, the scribes and Pharisees contrived this situation to entrap Jesus Christ.

JOH 8:5, “Now in the Law Moses commanded us to stone such women [execute her]; now what do you say?”

Indeed, verse 6 reveals the true motivation of the scribes and Pharisees in presenting this woman before our Lord.

JOH 8:6, “And they were saying this, testing Him, in order that they might have grounds for accusing Him. But Jesus stooped down, and with His finger wrote on the ground.”

Now, we do not know what he wrote. Perhaps He was writing sins on the ground and then looking at the very ones who had committed sins similar to the sin they accused the woman of committing. Or, He may have just been ignoring their arrogant attitudes and their lust to do harm to another human being. Finally, he did speak and said, “He that is without sin among you, let

him first cast a stone at her.”

JOH 8:7, “But when they persisted in asking Him, He straightened up and He said to them, ‘He who is without sin among you, let him be the first to throw a stone at her.’”

Our Lord made this statement carefully and deliberately. The scribes and Pharisees were trying to entrap Him, trying to get Him to say that the Mosaic Law was wrong. But the Mosaic Law was not wrong; it just was not pertinent to the situation.

JOH 8:8, “And again He stooped down and wrote on the ground.”

JOH 8:9, “And when they heard it, they began to go out one by one, beginning with the leaders,”

With religion and self-righteousness, the leaders are usually the worst ones. So, the Pharisees, who thought themselves holy, were driven away by guilt. Eventually only Jesus and the woman were left in the midst of the crowd.

JOH 8:10, “And straightening up, Jesus said to her, ‘Woman, where are they? Did no one condemn you?’”

JOH 8:11, “And she said, ‘*Oudeis kurie* [not one, Lord].’ And Jesus said, ‘Neither do I condemn you; go your way. From now on sin no more.’”

Notice, the scribes and Pharisees called Him Rabbi or teacher. But the woman called Him Lord, which indicates that she was a believer (1CO 12:3).

1CO 12:3, “No one can say that Jesus is Lord except by the Holy Spirit.”

So, this woman was a believer caught in the act of adultery. And, if you are legalistic, you would mistranslate the end of verse 11, “Go out and do not live a life of sin.” What self-righteous, pompous, arrogant legalism such a translation is. Such a translation is tantamount to the attitude of the scribes and Pharisees all over again. But, in reality, the phrase “sin no more” is the Greek negative adverb *meketi* plus the Greek verb *hamartane* and means “stop this category of sinning.”

Now, the Lord Jesus Christ would never tell anyone to stop sinning, for we will sin as long as we live (1John 1:8,10). Not one of us is perfect. All of us have an old sin nature. It may be that our sins become subtler and more compatible with self-righteousness, but we still sin. And, in fact, the adulterous woman’s sin is not among the seven worst sins listed in Proverbs chapter 6. But many of the sins of the scribes and Pharisees are listed there.

So, a principle emerges – the self-righteous hypocritical scribes and Pharisees who brought this woman before Jesus were guilty of far worse sins than she was.

Since she was caught in the actual act of adultery the man was, obviously, permitted to escape. It is interesting that the woman's accusers crept away feeling guilty, but the woman, who was guilty, left being forgiven. She did not earn the right or deserve to have her guilt removed, but, in grace, it was. And we should realize that God does not bless us because we deserve blessing, but because, in grace, He desires to bless us. But, if you think that you must earn blessing, you will end up feeling guilty when God graciously blesses you.

The principle, then, to remember is that guilt separates you from receiving the gifts that God has for you.

It is not what you deserve that matters; it is what Christ has done for you that matters. Never let guilt motivate you to pay for what you have done wrong. Jesus Christ, on the Cross, paid for what you have done. He paid for all of your sins and guilt.

### **Chapter 3**

#### **Transference Arrogance And The “Good” Of Evil**

We are now ready to analyze another passage which illustrates several principles concerning guilt. Job’s “friend” Bildad accused Job of secret sin and implied that divine discipline was the reason for Job’s suffering and illness. Furthermore, Bildad concluded that if Job did not recover from his destitute state and sickness, it was Job’s fault.

JOB 8:6, “[Bildad said to Job] If you are pure and upright, surely now He [God] would rouse Himself for you and restore your righteous estate.”

In other words, if Job were truly pure and upright, the Lord would come through for him and make him prosperous. Bildad is telling Job that Job lacks faith and that he is sick because of his own sin.

JOB 8:5, “If you would seek God and implore the compassion of the Almighty,”

JOB 8:6, “If you are pure and upright, surely now He would rouse Himself for you and restore your righteous estate.”

In Job chapter 8, Bildad is insinuating that if Job became more righteous and sought for God, God would hear his prayer and he would be healed.

Now, what is the implication? The implication is that Job was under the chastisement of God and, if Job wanted to receive healing and be restored to God, it is within his own power to do so by becoming more righteous. And this conclusion, of course, is simply using guilt to motivate a believer to change by his own power. It is unadulterated legalism. Little does Bildad realize that Job’s trials and tribulations are undeserved suffering and offer the opportunity to glorify God in the Angelic Conflict.

As an example, let us look at an individual that claims to be a faith healer. He lays his hands upon the sick but the sick do not recover. The faith healer immediately removes himself from the guilt of not being able to heal by blaming those that are sick and implying that the sick were not healed because of their lack of faith. So, the faith healer takes the guilt from his own life and passes it down to those who already have enough guilt concerning their very own sicknesses.

So, a principle emerges – when people are plagued by guilt, they look for others to transfer their guilt upon (in transference arrogance).

A husband comes home from a day at work. Maybe he has been the victim of verbal abuse on his job and he has been made to feel guilty. He comes into the house, looks around at the house, and says to his wife, “Look at this mess.” He then shakes his head and walks away. What has he done? He has taken the guilt that he has in his own life from true, imagined, or accused failure and he tries to place that guilt on his wife. He harbors an inner need to transfer his guilt over to

someone else. Sometimes we call this “the blame game!”

Again, the principle here is simple: guilty people rid themselves of their own guilt by arousing guilt in others. This principle is usually the basis behind the blame game. A child makes a terrible decision and one guilty parent says to the other, “It’s because you don’t know how to handle him.” The blame game is one sign that a person has not grown up. Taking responsibility for one’s own decisions is a sign of maturity.

Now, a sad truth in life is that strong personalities rid themselves of guilt by placing it on weaker persons with frail personalities. This happens many times in marriage. Most of the time, it is the husband who passes his guilt on to his wife, but it can also go in the opposite direction when there is a domineering woman.

There are people who are so guilty about their own lives that they search for others upon whom they can release this guilt. But we should not seek out someone in order to transfer our guilt upon them. Instead, we should work out our own lives, not the lives of others (PHI 2:12).

PHI 2:12, “So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your [own] salvation with fear and trembling;”

PRO 30:10, “Do not slander a slave to his master, lest he curse you and you be found guilty.”

Do not make accusations against others, especially the Lord’s people, lest you end up being the one condemned and guilty.

LUK 6:37, “And do not condemn, and you will not be condemned.”

The guilt that you possess and try to transfer to others ends up coming right back to you, often multiplied!

PRO 17:15, “He who justifies the wicked, and he who condemns the righteous, both of them alike are an abomination to the Lord.”

So, the end result of those who try to transfer their guilt is that they have more and more guilt themselves. And when a person feels guilty, it will hinder his relationship with the Lord. Moreover, guilt hinders a person from being able to love himself; that is, guilt hinders spiritual self-esteem. And since it takes spiritual self-esteem for an individual to love his neighbor, a guilt-ridden person is not able to impersonally love his neighbor (GAL 5:14, JAM 2:8).

Numerous believers are so guilty about the mistakes of yesterday that they never enjoy the mercy and compassion of the Lord today described in Lamentations 3:22-23.

LAM3:22, “The Lord’s lovingkindnesses indeed never cease, for His compassions never fail.”

LAM 3:23, “They are new every morning; great is Thy faithfulness.”

I once heard a mother make this statement to her son: “You just wait until I am dead, then you will feel sorry.” Now that statement may not mean all that much to us, but imagine the feelings of guilt that will come upon that child when the mother dies. Words come back to us at the strangest times and ring in our ears. We must be careful what we say to one another. We must be careful that we do not generate a guilt complex in another person’s life. Evil words and evil thoughts can produce guilt.

JER 17:9, “The heart is more deceitful than all else and is desperately sick; who can understand it?”

We must be extremely cognizant of what kinds of thoughts are residing in our hearts because the heart is so deceitful.

ISA 1:5b, “The whole head is sick, and the whole heart is faint.”

The heart, without a serious intake of Bible doctrine, is described in this passage from Isaiah.

ISA 1:6, “From the sole of the foot even to the head there is nothing sound in it, only bruises, welts, and raw wounds.”

This passage is a picture of the believer minus doctrine or of a believer who has let garbage into his soul (ISA 44:20).

ISA 44:20, “He feeds on ashes [garbage]; a deceived heart has turned him aside. And he cannot deliver himself, nor say, ‘Is there not a lie in my right hand?’”

Remember! Doctrine in, doctrine out. Garbage in, garbage out. You are what you eat spiritually (MAT 4:4). And through his system of projection, Satan is able to transfer evil thoughts to the soul of any believer who opens up his soul to satanic thinking (EPH 6:16). And if the thinking of a believer becomes influenced by satanic viewpoint, his thoughts eventually become evil. And evil thoughts, of course, lead to evil actions. Many believers feel guilty about their evil thoughts, but in truth, they are simply thinking without Bible doctrine resident in their hearts (minds). A believer without an edification complex of the soul will think with a sick head and a deceitful heart. And though we may be shocked about many things which God reveals about our lives, nothing about our lives shocks God; He knows all.

ROM 7:18, “For I know that nothing good dwells in me.”

When a believer begins to discover that there are still things in his life that are “no good,” this should not cause feelings of guilt. After all, scripture teaches that this principle is true for all men (ROM 3:10-12).

ROM 3:10, “As it is written, ‘There is none righteous, not even one;’”

ROM 3:11, “There is none who understands, there is none who seeks for God;”

ROM 3:12, “All have turned aside, together they have become useless; there is none who does good, there is not even one.”

Why should the believer feel guilty about his sins and failures after being taught that nothing good dwells in man’s nature? This old sin nature resides in the believer until he dies. This Adamic nature cannot be changed, try as we may. It is the basis for the unbeliever’s condemnation (ROM 5:12). Belief in Jesus Christ is the only escape from this condemnation (JOH 3:18).

JOH 3:18, “He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.”

No matter how guilty the believer may feel, the fact remains that all his sins and all his guilt were placed upon the Lord Jesus Christ at the Cross. So, the next time you feel guilty, thank the Lord Who took away your guilt instead of surrendering to the guilt.

HEB 12:2, “Fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, Who for the joy set before Him endured the Cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.”

All of our guilt has been transferred to Him, just as His righteousness has been transferred to us.

2CO 5:21, “He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.”

ISA 53:6b, “But the Lord has caused the iniquity of us all to fall on Him.”

Guilt can also arise from improper priorities; in particular, guilt may arise from making the details of life a priority over learning Bible doctrine. We see this principle in the account of Martha and Mary in Luke chapter 10.

LUK 10:38, “Now as they were traveling along, he entered a certain village; and a woman named Martha welcomed Him into her home.”

LUK 10:39, “And she had a sister called Mary, who moreover was listening to the Lord’s word, seated at His feet.”

Luke 10:40, “But Martha was distracted with all her preparations; and she came up to him, and said, ‘Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to do all the serving alone? Then tell her to help me.’”



LUK 10:41, “But the Lord answered and said to her, ‘Martha, Martha, you are worried and bothered about so many things;’”

LUK 10:42, “But only a few things are necessary, really only one, for Mary has chosen the good part, which shall not be taken away from her.”

For many believers, the issue is “should I study the Bible or clean the house?” Or, “should I receive doctrine or spend time with the children?” “I’ve got so much work to do at home and my relatives are coming over tomorrow.” Such are the thoughts of the believer who is in bondage to the details of life.

LUK 10:40, “But Martha was distracted with all her preparations; and she came up [to Him] and said, ‘Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to do all the serving alone? Then tell her to help me.’”

So, Martha felt guilty because the Lord was present and she knew that she should be listening to Him and, yet, her house was in disarray and she knew she should be cleaning the house. And her guilty feelings motivated her to blame someone else. First, she criticized the Lord by saying, “Don’t you care, Lord, that my sister has left me to serve alone?” Of course, the Lord cared and Martha actually knew it. However, Martha had need to transfer her guilt to another. Martha felt so guilty she began to criticize the Lord as well as her sister Mary.

So, a principle emerges – people burdened with guilt attempt to relieve that guilt by criticizing others.

Martha had guilt in her life and she desired to transfer that guilt to either Mary or the Lord by criticizing them. She said, “Lord, what’s Mary doing? She is at your feet when all this work needs to be done!” Martha was so worried and concerned about the details of life that she did not make time to fellowship with the Lord. Her priorities were wrong and her realization of this fact produced guilt in her. And such a situation means that Martha was not able to enjoy the present moment because she was constantly concerned with the details of life, what she should or should not be doing.

Guilt-ridden people are falsely motivated to do things; they feel they have a need to work away their guilt. And guilt-ridden people have difficulty receiving gracious gifts. Therefore, their priorities are wrong and they find themselves trying to do things for others instead of hearing the Word of God. They are actually trying to “clean up their act” for God instead of allowing the Lord to minister to them. Like Martha, they often end up complaining about and criticizing those who do receive the Word. And, in doing so, they attempt to transfer their guilt to others.

Guilt-ridden people often have difficulty saying “no” to others. But there are times when we should say no to the requests of others and refuse to enter into bondage to the needs of others. In chapter 6 of John’s Gospel, we find an account when the Lord Jesus Christ refused to let others dictate his schedule when such an action would have distracted Him from the plan of God for

Him. He did not operate in pseudo-love and sentimentality motivated by guilt, but instead, followed doctrine.

JOH 6:10, “Jesus said, ‘Have the people sit down.’ Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, in number about five thousand.”

JOH 6:11, “Jesus therefore took the loaves; and having given thanks, He distributed to those who were seated; likewise also of the fish as much as they wanted.”

JOH 6:12, “And when they were filled, He said to His disciples, ‘Gather up the leftover fragments that nothing may be lost.’”

JOH 6:13, “And so they gathered them up, and filled twelve baskets with fragments from the five barley loaves, which were left over by those who had eaten.”

JOH 6:14, “When therefore the people saw the sign which He had performed, they said, ‘This is of a truth the Prophet who is to come into the world.’”

In Joh 6:15, “Jesus therefore perceiving that they were intending to come and take Him by force, to make Him king, withdrew again to the mountain by Himself alone.”

Our Lord Jesus Christ knew when to say “no.” And He was not apologetic. He did not compromise. He did not feel bad or wallow in sentimentality. He stood firm on doctrine. He knew when to separate from others.

So, a principle emerges – there is a time to refuse certain demands and there is a time to separate from those making demands.

We all need to learn to say “no” at times for, if we say “yes” due to guilt, then whatever we do will be done from the wrong motivation. If someone has a specific need and you are not able to accommodate it, you should not feel guilty. Guilt does not motivate a person with spiritual self-esteem. Such a person will say “yes” when they are able to meet a need and “no” when they cannot meet the need. So, what determines when a believer can or cannot say “yes?” Bible doctrine, of course.

So, the inability to refuse a demand is often due to guilt and may also produce guilt in the believer. Another situation which may induce guilt in a believer is when he compares himself to others. Many times, people become guilt-ridden due to feelings of inadequacy or due to some type of inferiority complex. When a person decides to compare himself to others, he will react with pride (if he feels superior) or he will experience guilt (if he feels inferior). And life teaches us that there will always be someone “better” than us and that there will also always be someone “worse” than us. And this desire to compare ourselves with others is due to a lack of Bible doctrine in the right lobe according to 2Corinthians 10:12.

2CO 10:12, “For we are not bold to class or compare ourselves with some of those who commend themselves; but when they measure themselves by themselves and compare themselves with themselves, they are without understanding.”

And what will the guilt derived from comparison produce? Such guilt motivates the believer to attempt to become a better Christian through his own power in the energy of the flesh (the old sin nature). He may enter into a subtle works program, often offered by a “program-oriented” church. Or, he may end up living in “personality imitation,” trying to be someone he is not. And, often, the final result is more guilt because of failure.

Instead of comparing himself to others, the believer should rest in his relationship with God provided by the finished work of Jesus Christ on the Cross (1CO 15:10). This faith-rest is termed spiritual self-esteem, the first stage of spiritual adulthood.

1CO 15:10, “But by the grace of God, I am what I am;”

And the realization that you have an unshakeable relationship with God should result in a personal sense of destiny (problem-solving device #6); God has a specific plan just for you (PHI 1:6, 2:13).

PHI 1:6, “For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.”

PHI 2:13, “For it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure.”

But, guilt will motivate you to compare yourself with others and to compete with them. The inevitable result is separation from God and people.

Another principle regarding guilt involves a believer’s awareness of his weaknesses. Many believers have difficulty accepting their weaknesses, and such an attitude engenders them to lose confidence in their relationships with the Lord. Their guilt magnifies their wretchedness so that they take their eyes off the Lord and concentrate on their guilt and their weaknesses. Instead, they should heed Paul’s viewpoint found in 2Corinthians 12:10.

2CO 12:10, “Therefore I am well content with weaknesses, with insults, with distresses, with persecutions, with difficulties, for Christ’s sake: for when I am weak, then I am strong.”

Inevitably, we all discover how weak we really are. At such a time, confidence in the Lord Jesus Christ and the Word of God is of utmost importance. This confidence results in spiritual self-esteem and a personal sense of destiny, which protects the believer from guilt and from the criticism of others. So, when busybodies bring to light your weaknesses, do not be intimidated. And do not retaliate or argue with them, but avoid them. Separate from them, run away from them, cut them off.

1PE 4:15, “By no means let any of you suffer as a murderer, or thief, or evildoer, or as a busybody in other people’s matters.”

Instead, realize that we believers are earthen vessels containing divine treasure, that is, the indwelling of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Shekinah glory (COL 1:27)!

COL 1:27, “Christ in us our hope [or confidence] of glory.”

We should also remember that we have been given the ministry of God the Holy Spirit to sustain us so that the excellency of our power may be from God and not of us.

2CO 4:7, “But we have this treasure in earthen vessels [human bodies], that the surpassing greatness of the power may be of God and not from ourselves;”

And so, whether we are weak or strong, God’s grace is the answer. We have the power to be strong and we have the power to bear with our weakness. When we are strong, we need grace to keep us humble. When we are weak, we need grace to deliver us from guilt. Though we are weak and frail and deserve to be condemned, the Lord has replaced our condemnation and guilt with divine blessing (ROM 8:1).

Therefore, when guilt arises, God’s grace is the answer. In reality, the sin in a believer’s life is not the main issue in the spiritual life of the believer. Sin was dealt with once and for all on the Cross (JOH 19:30, 1JO 2:2) and post-salvation sin’s effect on fellowship with God has been addressed through the principle of rebound (1JO 1:9).

The real issue in a believer’s life is evil. Evil is the policy of Satan and his kingdom of darkness used to oppose the will and plan of God. Evil often motivates the believer to develop a false sense of morality through legalism, self-righteousness, emotionalism, and religion. And, as we have already observed, such evil “morality” often motivates the believer to embark on a works program in order to feel accepted by God.

So, a principle emerges – Satan uses the power of guilt to manipulate the believer into evil actions of legalism, self-righteousness, emotionalism, and religion.

In the passage discussing the adulterous woman, the Lord was able to free the woman from the guilt of her sin, but He was not able to free the scribes and Pharisees from their choice to pursue self-righteous, hypocritical legalism. The scribes and the Pharisees, being influenced by evil, offered up human good in the form of religion as their means of acceptance or approval by God. Evil motivated them to attempt an evil act, the stoning of the woman. Likewise, many believers today suppress their own guilt by becoming religious. And, by becoming religious, they enter into Satan’s system of evil. Notice that evil may involve seemingly “good” thoughts or actions, but if they contradict God’s plan of grace, they are, in fact, evil.

Guilt can also arise in a believer's life when he realizes that he has neglected to do something that he knows he should be doing.

JAM 4:17, "Therefore, to one who knows the right thing to do, and does not do it, to him it is sin."

So, we find that the believer may experience guilt for the evil things he has done or for the neglect of actions that he should have done. And Satan uses this guilt to falsely motivate us to perform dead works in the power of the flesh instead of divine good through the power of the Holy Spirit. Satan promotes creature-credit over creator-credit, a pivotal issue in the Angelic Conflict. So, we should ascertain whose power we are using – the energy of the old sin nature motivated by guilt or the power of the Spirit motivated by the new nature.

Guilt will falsely motivate the believer to do many things. Guilt will manipulate the believer into arrogance. Guilt energizes the believer. Most believers today function under the energy of arrogance, emotionalism, guilt, condemnation, fear, worry, and revenge motivation. But, the actions resulting from this guilt-derived energy are wrong because the motivation for doing them is wrong. And, although many of these actions may seem "good" superficially, they are actually evil. So, let us further examine some principles regarding evil.

1. Evil is the policy and plan of Satan and his kingdom of darkness to oppose the gracious plan of God.

Evil often involves overtly "good" actions, but the motivation for these actions is wrong (MAT 6:1-8). Evil promotes creature-credit and denies creator-credit. Evil subverts grace.

2. Evil resides in the heart of man and is the source of much strife.

PSA 140:2b, "Who devise evil things in their hearts; they continually stir up wars."

3. Deliverance from evil comes from respecting the Lord.

The only way that a believer will ever be delivered from being under the influence of evil is by respecting the Lord. In the Church-age, respect for the Lord means positive volition towards Bible doctrine. The believer must think and live in a manner that God desires.

PRO 3:7, "Do not be wise in your own eyes [human viewpoint]; respect the Lord [divine viewpoint] and turn away from evil."

4. Those under the influence of evil will be under the influence of deception.

PRO 12:20, "Deceit is in the heart of those who devise evil, but counselors of peace have inner happiness."

5. A believer with doctrine will turn away from evil, even if friends or family members are involved with it.

PRO 14:16, “A wise man is cautious and turns away from evil, but a fool is arrogant and careless.”

But, many believers become arrogant and careless with their commitment, dedication, and loyalty to the Lord Jesus Christ and Bible doctrine.

6. Believers who become involved with evil will go astray from the Lord.

PRO 14:22, “Will they not go astray who devise evil? But grace and truth will be to those who devise good.”

7. A wise believer has nothing to do with those who are influenced by evil.

PRO 22:3, “The prudent sees the evil and hides himself, but the naive go on, and are punished for it.”

PRO 27:12, “A prudent man sees evil and hides himself, the naive proceed and pay the penalty.”

8. The wise believer goes to the house of God to listen to God’s Word, but the evil believer goes there to make meaningless sacrifices.

ECC 5:1, “Guard your steps as you go to the house of God, and draw near to listen rather than to offer the sacrifice of fools; for they do not know they are doing evil.”

9. Bitterness and jealousy result from evil and reside in the hearts of those under its influence.

JER 4:18, “Your ways and your deeds have brought these things to you. This is your evil. How bitter! How it has touched your heart!”

10. Character, integrity, and honesty protect the believer from evil’s influence.

MAT 5:37, “But let your statement be, ‘Yes, Yes or No, No’; and anything beyond these is of evil.”

11. Evil thoughts produce evil works no matter how good the works appear to be on the surface.

MAT 12:35, “The good man out of his good treasure brings forth what is good; and the evil man out of his evil treasure brings forth what is evil.”

12. Doctrine commands believers to reject evil.

ROM 12:9, “Abhor [despise] what is evil; cling to what is good.”

1TH 5:22, “Abstain from every form of evil.”

HEB 3:12, “Take care, brethren, lest there should be in any one of you an evil, unbelieving heart, in falling away from the living God.”

HEB 5:14, “But solid food is for the mature, who because of practice have their senses trained to discern between divine good and evil.”

So, we should realize that Satan, as the god of this world, uses guilt to control the believer and manipulate the believer to become involved in evil. This satanic control is part of the Angelic Conflict where evil is the policy of Satan and grace is the policy of God. Just as grace and Bible doctrine represent the genius of God in relationship to the human race, so evil represents the genius of Satan in relationship to the human race.

The soul is the battleground of every believer in the Church-age. Control of the soul is the major issue in the Angelic Conflict (EPH 5:18); one controls the soul by controlling a believer’s thoughts. What you think is more important than you may realize. Basically, there are two ways of thinking for the believer:

- A. Divine viewpoint arises from Bible doctrine which glorifies Christ.
- B. Human viewpoint arises from worldly influence which dishonors Christ.

Therefore, the issue in the spiritual life is wisdom derived from Bible doctrine versus evil thinking derived from Satan’s cosmic system. And, while recovery from sin is instantaneous through use of the rebound technique (1JO 1:9), recovery from evil takes time because it involves the daily perception, metabolization, and application of Bible doctrine.

Now, when evil is manifested in a believer, his human good attempts to solve the problems of life apart from doctrine and divine establishment. Religion is the greatest of all evil. Legalism and apostasy are great evils. Evil originated with Satan and existed before human history. And Satan himself transmitted evil into humanity. In his great genius, Satan devised a system to give creatures credit, rather than giving God the credit. And following Satan’s pattern of creature-credit, many believers will say, “We give all the glory to God,” but actually teach works which, inevitably, give glory to man.

So, evil originated in the greatest creature to ever come from the hand of God. Satan has devised a system of evil whereby an individual may seem to be nice, lovely, and a responsible member of society, and yet, behind this façade of “good” lurks an evil, destructive person who is self-deluded. Satan’s system of evil also promotes believers who seem nice, lovely, and appear upright to other Christians, and yet, behind this mask of respectability lurks a self-righteous, judgmental, legalistic loser. In fact, Satan controls most of Christianity through his cosmic

system. And the issue that encourages people to function in his cosmic system is arrogance.

The current strategy of Satan's scheme to negate the gracious plan of God is a plan to bring the Millennium into existence before Christ returns and establishes His 1,000-year reign on earth. Satan, as the current god of this world, desires to create a perfect environment on earth before Christ does it, making God a liar. And Satan not only uses his own people for this scheme, but he also influences God's people with evil to help accomplish his plan.

One of the most powerful weapons that Satan has at his disposal to influence God's people is guilt. Guilt leads the believer into moral degeneracy, whereby he attempts to gain the forgiveness or approbation of God through human good. And, the more the world follows Satan's plan, the greater degeneracy there will be. Evil and degeneracy start with a thought, a thought which motivates evil actions.

MAT 6:23, "But if your eye [gateway to the mind] is evil, the entire body is full of darkness [cosmic involvement]."

MAT 15:19, "For out of the heart [mind] comes evil thoughts."

Now, a believer's Christian friends often lead him into the cosmic system and evil.

1CO 15:33, "Evil companions corrupt good morals."

2TH 3:2-3, "That we may be delivered from perverse and evil men, for all believers do not have doctrine; but the Lord is faithful and He will strengthen you and protect you from evil."

But, God protects the believer who resides inside the Predesigned Plan of God through positive volition towards Bible doctrine.

PRO 12:21, "'No evil happens to the righteous.'"

PSA 37:17, "But the Lord sustains the righteous."

PSA 91:10, "No evil will befall you; you who love the Lord hate evil. The Lord preserves the souls of his mature ones; he delivers them from the hands of the evil one."

PSA 119:101, "I have refrained my feet from evil, so that I may keep Your doctrine."

PSA 121:7, "The Lord will protect you from all evil; He will guard your soul."

The attitude of the mature believer toward evil is stated in Psalm 84:10.

PSA 84:10, "For a day in your courts is better than a thousand days in the cosmic system. I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my Lord than to dwell in the tents of evil."



So, the real issue for the believer today is a choice between grace and evil. Every generation has to choose between the grace policy of God represented by the Cross and the evil policy of Satan engendered by arrogance and guilt and leading to creature-credit. This issue has been with the human race since the Garden of Eden.

The genius of God has perpetuated the issue of volition throughout human history and throughout the human race. And the same issue of volition is true for the Royal Family of God in the Church-age – are we motivated by Bible doctrine or are we influenced by evil?

Our parents, Adam and the woman, faced the issue of volition. Would they be influenced by God's grace in providing the tree of life or would they be influenced by the tree of knowledge of good and evil? Would they freely choose to follow God or would they rebel against God's grace as Satan did? Grace illuminates doctrinal principles; evil, as Satan's policy, inculcates false doctrine (PRO 11:18-19, 14:22, 15:3, 16:6, 22:3, 24:1-4; EPH 5:16; 2TH 3:2-3).

Now, because of the genius of Satan and the ease he has in deceiving believers, the Lord has given them protection from evil. The believer who is faithful to doctrine and the super-grace believer are protected from evil (JAM 4:6, 3JO 1:4). The greatest of all evil attacks the believer who is in super-grace. So, when you mature as a believer, you face all kinds of evil because Satan desires the mature believer to become distracted from doctrine or to reject doctrine (PSA 21:11, 23:4; PRO 12:12,20,21; GEN 48:16, 50:20). But, God, in His grace, provides divine protection from evil for the positive believer.

PRO 1:33, "He who listens to me shall live in security, and shall be at ease without fear of evil."

PRO 16:6b, "By occupation with the Lord, one avoids evil."

PRO 19:23, "The respect of the Lord leads to life and prosperity, so that one may rest satisfied, untouched by evil."

So, the more doctrine you have in your soul, the more you will love the Lord and the more you will hate evil. All thoughts you have involve a battle for your soul (PRO 3:7).

PRO 3:7, "Do not be wise in your own eyes; Fear the Lord and turn away from evil."

The negative believer finds many issues to which he can react and he moves into the various stages of reversionism (apostasy) easily. Remember, Satan, as the ruler of this current world, is capable of rewarding those he finds useful. He can offer the reversionistic believer a form of pseudo-blessing, a pseudo-position of promotion, and pseudo-prosperity.

So, the consistent intake of Bible doctrine is the only insulation from evil for the believer. Metabolized doctrine resides where evil thoughts desire to be, in the right lobe (heart) where thoughts and motivation arise. Doctrine combats evil thinking.

Now, legalism is one of the most dangerous forms of evil that Satan promotes in a believer. When guilt motivates the believer to think and act in a legalistic fashion, arrogance becomes the energy or power system under which the believer operates (instead of under the power of the Holy Spirit). So, let us look briefly at legalism.

Paul's letter to the Galatian church and six chapters from his letter to the Roman church teach that the arrogance of legalism originates from self-righteousness.

The arrogance of legalism is the vanity of the unique experience and an erroneous emphasis on human achievement. This arrogance is derived from a believer's ignorance or rejection of Bible doctrine, including the following doctrines:

1. The unique characteristics of the Church-age.
2. The fantastic privileges of the Church-Age believer.
3. The escrow blessings available to the Church-Age believer.
4. The divine decrees.
5. The equal privilege and equal opportunity for the Church-Age believer in the Predesigned Plan of God.
6. The Church-Age believer's union with Christ which produces a royal family for God and results in a new spiritual species.
7. The Predesigned Plan of God for each Church-Age believer
8. The indwelling of the Trinity in each Church-Age believer.
9. The unique power made available to the believer in the Church-age.

Now, failing to understand these things, the arrogant believer falsely believes that the Mosaic Law is for him. He desires to use the morality of God's laws for the nation of Israel as the basis for the Christian way of life. But, the morality of Israel was for both believers and unbelievers. And, if an unbeliever can do it, it is not the means of spirituality for the Church-Age believer. The Christian way of life is a supernatural way of life and demands a supernatural means of execution.

Self-righteous arrogance includes any form of legalism. It involves three general categories, which are:

- (1) Salvation by works or human achievement or by adding something to simple faith for eternal life.

But the scripture makes it clear that only faith is required for salvation. Yet many people are not satisfied with the work of Jesus Christ on the Cross and want to add their own works to it. However, salvation was finished on the Cross (JOH 19:30, EPH 2:8-9). It is blasphemous and legalistic to try to add some system of works to the efficacious, unlimited atonement provided by the work of Christ on the Cross (1JO 2:2).

- (2) Spirituality by works, in which people refrain from certain taboos and call it spirituality.
- (3) Blessings from God on the basis of works, human achievement, self-sacrifice, morality, giving, conforming to a church program, or participating in some ritual.

The legalist also has no understanding of the holiness of God, made up of His divine justice and divine righteousness. God imputed His own perfect righteousness to us at salvation for justification so that we could become the objects of God's personal love and so that God could bless His perfect righteousness in us with logistical grace blessings. God found a way to bless believers without compromising His character. God does not bless you because of anything you do, but because you have His perfect righteousness (MAT 5:20, 6:33; 2CO 5:21).

This legalistic viewpoint can also be classified as blind arrogance in which the vanity derived from being divorced from the realities of Bible doctrine leads to the erroneous conclusion that the believer is victorious, mature, or great because of some unique experience, some sacrificial way of living, or some system of human works. Blind arrogance concludes that the plan of God succeeds or fails on the basis of how the believer functions, rather than on the basis of logistical grace from God.

In blind arrogance, self-righteous arrogance motivates while legalism is the function that ensues from that motivation. Legalism may be defined as the audacity of the energy of the flesh, the blasphemy of Christian works being substituted for the divine provision of grace, or the presumption of replacing divine assets with the conceit of pretensions based in human ability.

Now, the arrogance of morality functions much like the irrationality of legalism. And when there is any malfunction of this self-righteous arrogance, the individual is always shocked. In his shocked state, the arrogant individual concludes that "Bible doctrine does not work" and that "the plan of God has failed because I have failed or someone else has failed." Self-righteous arrogance correlated with the arrogance of legalism concludes that the plan of God succeeds or fails on the basis of human works, rather than concluding the truth – the plan of God succeeds on the basis of what He does in grace, working on our behalf. Therefore, legalism establishes false standards and measures spiritual success on the basis of complying with these false standards.

## **Chapter 4**

### **Guilt Motivates Arrogant Legalism**

So far, we have noted that guilt is a widespread problem found in the life of every believer. Guilt can destroy the correct motivation of the believer, but can also motivate the believer to enter into evil actions, such as works programs and arrogant legalism. God's grace and forgiveness provide the solution for guilt, which the parable of Luke 18:9-14 illustrates.

LUK 18:9, "And he also told this parable to certain ones who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and viewed others with contempt [ridicule, disgust, scorn]."

In fact, these certain ones thought that their little systems of self-righteousness placed God in debt to them. They thought that they were as holy as they needed to be and holier than all their neighbors. And so they looked down upon others and thought they were better than others.

LUK 18:10, "Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee, and the other a tax collector."

The tax collector was a Roman aristocrat, but was considered by the Jews to be of the lowest of all social ranks at the time of this parable. He was generally very wealthy and employed Jews such as Matthew to work for him. And Jewish tax collectors were considered to be traitors by other Jews. And yet, our Lord associated with publicans (tax collectors) and sinners (prostitutes), as documented in such passages as Matthew 9:10. Of course, this action offended the Pharisees. And the Pharisees criticized our Lord for being a friend of tax collectors and prostitutes. Moreover, the tax collectors and prostitutes kept coming to listen to our Lord because of their positive volition to the Gospel (LUK 15:1-2).

LUK 15:1, "Now all the tax-gatherers and the sinners were coming near Him to listen to Him."

LUK 15:2, "And both the Pharisees and the scribes [began] to grumble, saying, 'This man receives sinners [prostitutes] and eats with them.'"

Returning to our parable in Luke chapter 18, we find that the arrogant Pharisee followed the Roman tax collector into the temple in order to criticize him.

LUK 18:11, "The Pharisee stood and was praying like this to himself, 'God, I thank thee that I am not like other people: swindlers, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector.'"

The Pharisee thought he was beyond reproach, like many self-righteous people today. Notice that he does not say, "I am what I am by the grace of God."

LUK 18:12, "I fast twice a week; I pay tithes of all that I get."

The Pharisees would fast every Monday and Thursday.

LUK 18:13, “But the tax collector, standing some distance away, was even unwilling to lift up his eyes to heaven, but was beating his breast [a sign of his legitimate guilt] saying, ‘God, be merciful to me, the sinner!’”

LUK 18:14, “I say to you, this man [the tax collector] went down to his home having been justified rather than the other [the Pharisee]. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but he who humbles himself will be exalted.”

And so, in verse 11, the Pharisee thanked God that he was not like other men, that he was not an extortioner, an adulterer, or even like the publican. Then, in verse 12, the Pharisee bragged about the fact that he fasted twice a week and gave tithes of all that he owned. Meanwhile, the publican, standing at a distance from the temple, would not even lift his eyes to heaven. He merely asked God for forgiveness because he was a sinner.

Now, if we were living at the time Jesus taught this parable and if we observed a Pharisee and a publican, we would most likely be impressed with the human good of the Pharisee. But it takes doctrinal discernment to be able to distinguish between Satan’s policy of evil and God’s policy of grace. For instance, you may observe a man who seems pure, who looks right and says all the right things, who does not commit overt sins and appears to be righteous. Then, you might meet a person who appears to be a failure and seems to be evil, but in reality, he recognizes his helpless and hopeless condition and relies on the grace of God for his strength. Which man is following the plan of God?

The majority of believers cannot distinguish between divine good and “good and evil.” So, we must be careful that we do not have the spirit of Phariseeism in our own lives. A Pharisee was a Jew and a religious leader who believed in salvation by works and spirituality by works. He went to the temple with an attitude of self-vindication. He entered the temple to prove that he was right before God.

In Luke 18, the Pharisee was likely following the tax collector and wanted to prove that the tax collector was confused. But, in reality, the tax collector understood Who and What Christ was through observation of the various Levitical sacrifices. There are two words in this passage which describe the attitude of each man. Both of these words come from the same Greek root word: to stand.

LUK 18:11, “The Pharisee stood and was praying thus to himself,”

LUK 18:13, “but the tax-gatherer, standing some distance away,”

In these two verses, we have the exact same Greek verb put in a different tense to reveal the attitude of each man. In verse 11, we have the aorist passive participle of the Greek verb *histemi*, which is *statheis* and means “to take a stand.” And, as we will see, it means to take a stand for his own good works. So, *statheis* means that the Pharisee took a stand based on his own system of self-righteousness. It indicates that he took up his position ostentatiously in a static and

upright position of perfect security and self-satisfaction.

On the other hand, the verb for “stood” used for the tax-gatherer is the perfect active participle of *histemi*, which is *hestos* and, in the perfect tense, means that he always had an attitude of humility as he stood before God. The active voice indicates that he chose to do this on his own conviction, not because something forced him to do it. He stood before God with a bowed head and in a position of humility and legitimate guilt.

Now, in Luke 18:11, the Pharisee was not praying “thus to himself,” but he was praying “about himself.” The Williams translation reads, “The Pharisee stood and said this self-centered prayer.” Then he said, “God, I thank you that I am not like other people.” Perhaps he even looked over at the tax collector when he said this. And, notice what he accuses others of being: swindlers (robbers), unjust (evil doers), and adulterers. But most of all, he was thankful that he was not like the tax collector. And, we can be sure that he said this last phrase loud enough for the tax collector to hear it. Such an act is typical of arrogant legalism! Legalism motivates long-winded prayers as well. The Pharisee used 29 words in his prayer; the tax collector used six. Legalism also promotes a self-centered attitude. Notice the five “I’s” in the Pharisee’s prayer.

LUK 18:11, “I thank thee that I am not like other people:”

Luke 18:12, “I fast twice a week; I pay tithes of all that I get.”

This was a prayer of self-congratulation, full of self-righteousness. In fact, the Pharisees had a tradition to the effect that every true Pharisee ought to thank God every day of his life for three things:

1. That he was not created a Gentile.
2. That he was not a plebeian (*plibeyen*), an ordinary Roman citizen.
3. That he was not born a woman.

In his self-righteous arrogance, the Pharisee was impressed with how he was keeping the Law. Moreover, the Pharisee was probably offended that the tax collector had the gall to even enter the temple. Therefore, in his arrogance, the Pharisee believed himself to be a role model. And, of course, he assumed that God agreed with him.

So, he said to God, “I fast twice a week.” But the law required only one fast in a year, on the great day of atonement (LEV 16:29, NUM 29:7). But, this supposedly devout Jew fasted every Monday and Thursday during the weeks between the Passover and Pentecost and again between the feast of Tabernacles and that of the dedication of the temple.

Moreover, the Pharisee said, “I give tithes of all that I possess.” But the Mosaic Law only required the Israelite to tithe on his gains, his annual increase, not on his possessions (DEU 14:22, LEV 27:30). This Pharisee tithed all that came his way, parading these virtues before

men, and seeking to make God his debtor. However, in reality, the Pharisee's attitude and prayer demonstrate that a man's self-righteousness and legalism expressed as religion will be his ruin.

In contradistinction, the tax collector was a truly humble man who recognized his helplessness before God.

LUK 18:13, "But the tax collector, standing some distance away, was even unwilling to lift up his eyes to heaven, but was beating his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me, the sinner.'"

Now, in ancient Rome, the beating of the breast was a sign that one recognized his guilt and failure and that he was a sinner. The phrase "be merciful" is the aorist middle imperative of the Greek verb *hilaskomai*, which means "to be gracious," "to be merciful," and "to be propitious." All three meanings are involved in this passage. The aorist tense is a culminative aorist which views the imputation and judgment of all sins in human history to the Lord Jesus Christ on the Cross (1JO 2:2). So, the tax collector was appealing to God based on the finished work of the Messiah in dealing with the sin issue (JOH 19:30).

The tax collector was a believer by the doctrine he learned from observation of the Levitical sacrifices and offerings, so he did not beg God to save him, but rather "to be propitious" to him. And, if he had asked for love and mercy from God, he would have excluded the propitiatory work of Christ on the Cross. But he had already trusted in the work Christ would perform and, instead, he asked that the justice of God be satisfied with his faith in that finished work.

There is only one way to come before God. There is only one way to have eternal life. There is only one way to maintain our fellowship with God. And the way to accomplish these things is to approach God on the basis of the merit of His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. This is why we pray to God "in Jesus' name." It is His merit that allows believers to approach God.

LUK 18:14, "I tell you, this man [the tax collector, the gentile] went down to his home having been justified rather than the other [the Pharisee]. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but he who humbles himself will be exalted."

The phrase "to be humbled" means to approach God without any form of human works or merit for salvation or for restoration to fellowship with God. The Pharisee was not humble. The Pharisee exalted himself before God. The Pharisee bragged about himself. And the Pharisee went home wrapped in the same garment of self-justification that he wore into the temple. But, after all his self-justification, he was not accepted and not approved by God.

But the tax collector went home divinely justified. Though self-condemned, he received a righteousness apart from human works or merit and went home with the joy of his sins forgiven (ROM 3:24,25; 4:5-6; 5:9).

So, in this passage, the Pharisee represents blind arrogance and self-righteous legalism. Legalism promotes two blasphemous functions.

(1) Salvation through keeping the law

This viewpoint is refuted in Paul's letter to the Galatians chapters 1-3 and in Romans 13:3-4.

(2) Spirituality through keeping the law

This viewpoint is also refuted in Paul's letter to the Galatians in chapters 4-6 and in Romans chapters 7-8.

Self-righteous arrogance seeks to impose its standards on others and judges them when they do not comply. The order of this process is as follows:

1. The believer fails, either in something that he has done or in something he has failed to do.
2. Then, the believer becomes the target of criticism and accusations.
3. Guilt then ensues and the believer must make a decision – rely on the grace of God or become involved with legalism and evil.
4. Once guilt motivates the believer, he falls under the wrong power system and becomes influenced by evil.
5. The influence of evil leads to legalism and self-righteous arrogance.
6. Legalism and self-righteous arrogance guarantee that the believer will be a loser in the Christian way of life and a soldier for the kingdom of darkness.

So, this process starts with guilt and ends with the believer being a loser at the judgment seat of Christ and in the eternal state. But, if truth convicts the believer, then truth will do what it is designed to do, which is to set the believer free (JOH 8:32). Remember that, ultimately, the Lord desires restoration, not destruction. He desires to set the believer free!

JOH 8:32, "You shall know the truth [Bible doctrine] and the truth will set you free."

We have already seen an account where Martha tried to pass her guilt off to Mary. But, once you realize that people have a desire to destroy you and pass their guilt along to you, then you will not take their opinions and accusations of you so seriously. If you do listen to them, you have let people-emphasis take precedence over God-emphasis. Too many believers are in bondage to what others think of them. We see this people-emphasis in the "dog and pony show" found in most churches that teach members to compliment each other, pay attention to each other, and pat each other on the head. Those who are people-oriented need the assurance that compliments bring, while those who are God-oriented have the confidence that spiritual self-esteem brings (1CO 15:10).



People-oriented individuals are terrified at what others think of them and, to avoid criticism, they are obsessed with doing everything that they can for acceptance by others. Often, an exaggerated emphasis is placed on the “proper” way to do things and if things are not done properly, the people-pleaser becomes defensive. This defensiveness, in turn, produces guilt and this guilt motivates him to blame someone else or some circumstance for his failure. The people-pleaser refuses to take responsibility for his actions; therefore, he is not in spiritual adulthood.

People-oriented individuals live in fear of rejection and feel that they can never be too careful. Therefore, they live in a world surrounded by fear and guilt. And, all too soon, these feelings give way to feelings of bitterness. This bitterness fragments the believer’s life and, often, is spread to others (HEB 12:15). The advantage of freedom found in Bible doctrine is foreign to such an individual. This guilt leading to bitterness must be recognized by the believer to protect the believer from condemnation and from people-emphasis taking precedence over God-emphasis.

So, a principle emerges – the only guilt the believer should heed is the conviction that comes from God the Holy Spirit.

And the purpose of conviction by the Holy Spirit is to correct the believer and restore his relationship to God and his inner happiness.

## **Chapter 5**

### **Freedom Derived from Grace Acceptance**

Let us turn our attention to another scriptural passage that reveals our Lord's graciousness, kindness, and love when He forgave someone who was guilty. Luke 7:36-50 records the story of the Lord Jesus Christ and the grateful prostitute who loved much.

LUK 7:36, "Now one of the Pharisees was requesting Him to dine with him. And He entered the Pharisee's house, and reclined [at the table]."

LUK 7:37, "And behold, there was a woman in the city who was a prostitute [not "sinner"]; and when she learned that He was reclining [at the table] in the Pharisee's house, she brought an alabaster vial of perfume,"

LUK 7:38, "And standing behind [Him] at His feet, weeping, she began to wet His feet with her tears, and kept wiping them with the hair of her head, and kissing His feet, and anointing them with the perfume."

LUK 7:39, "Now when the Pharisee who had invited Him saw this, he said to himself, 'If this man were a prophet [but he is not], He would know who and what sort of person this woman is who is touching Him, that she is a prostitute.'"

LUK 7:40, "And Jesus answered and said to him, 'Simon, I have something to say to you.' And he replied, 'Say it, Teacher.'"

LUK 7:41, "A certain moneylender had two debtors: one owed five hundred denarii [a roman silver coin worth one day's wages], and the other fifty."

LUK 7:42, "When they were unable to repay, he graciously forgave them both. Which of them therefore will love him more?"

LUK 7:43, "Simon answered and said, 'I suppose the one whom he forgave more.' And He said to him, 'You have judged correctly.'"

LUK 7:44, "And turning toward the woman, He said to Simon, 'Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave Me no water for My feet, but she has wet My feet with her tears, and wiped them with her hair.'"

LUK 7:45, "You gave Me no kiss; but she, since the time I came in, has not ceased to kiss My feet."

LUK 7:46, "You did not anoint My head with oil, but she anointed My feet with perfume."

LUK 7:47, "For this reason I say to you, her sins, which are many, have been forgiven, for she

loved much; but he who is forgiven little, loves little.”

LUK 7:48, “And He said to her, ‘Your sins have been forgiven.’”

LUK 7:49, “And those who were reclining [at the table] with Him began to say to themselves, ‘Who is this [man] who even forgives sins?’”

LUK 7:50, “And He said to the woman, ‘Your faith has saved you; go in peace.’”

Now, this incident is not the same incident described in John 12:1-8 at the house of Lazarus when Mary anointed the feet of Jesus with an expensive ointment. Nor is this the same incident found in Matthew 26:6-13 and Mark 14:1-3 where an unknown woman anointed the head of Jesus in the home of Simon the leper.

LUK 7:36, “Now one of the Pharisees was requesting Him or kept asking to dine with Him. And He entered the Pharisee’s house, and reclined [at the table].”

This Pharisee was not hostile to Jesus, but he was a user of others. He wanted to use Jesus to gain influence with or power over the crowds following Jesus. And, generally, we find that legalistic people are users of others. Legalists use other people and discard them when they are done with them.

But, notice the grace of our Lord in being willing to go and eat at a Pharisee’s house. The scene of this incident is in the courtyard of Simon the Pharisee. At the time of this event, there would often be a fountain and a garden in the courtyard where meals were eaten. And it was often the custom that when a Rabbi attended a meal in the courtyard, a crowd would gather to listen to the pearls of wisdom which fell from the lips of the teacher. This explains the presence of the woman in our passage.

When an honored guest entered such a house, three things were always done.

1. The host placed his hands on the guest’s shoulder and gave him the kiss of peace.

This was a mark of respect, never omitted in the case of a distinguished Rabbi.

2. Cool water was poured over the guest’s feet to cleanse and comfort them.

At the time of this event, the roads were dust and stone. Moreover, “shoes” were merely soles strapped to the feet, so a traveler’s feet were quite dirty.

3. Either a pinch of sweet smelling incense was burned or a drop of aroma of roses was placed on the guest’s head as an anointing.

In our passage, the Pharisee did not perform even one of these actions for Jesus.

Now, in Eastern culture, guests did not sit, but reclined at a table. The guests would lie on low couches resting on the left elbow leaving the right arm free to use. The guest's sandals were removed and the guest stretched out his legs on the couch.

And, immediately, we note that our Lord's attitude towards the Pharisee was the same attitude He expressed towards the tax collectors and prostitutes, one of grace and restoration. So, it was a relaxed time, but then an uninvited woman suddenly interrupted them.

LUK 7:37, "And behold, there was a woman in the city who was a prostitute [not sinner]:"

The Greek word for sinner in verse 37 is the adjective *hamartolos*, which refers to a prostitute in this passage. Dr. Henrik Renstorff of Germany indicates that this word, though used sometimes in a general way for sinfulness, is used primarily for those who live flagrantly immoral lives. He also states that it appears in the feminine gender for prostitutes and those who are in a constant state of immorality.

LUK 7:37, "And behold, there was a woman in the city who was a prostitute [not sinner]; and when she learned that He was reclining at the table in the Pharisee's house, she brought an alabaster vial of perfume,"

This prostitute had been following Jesus, became a believer, and wanted to give something back to the Lord because of what He had given her.

LUK 7:38, "And standing behind [Him] at His feet, [she was] weeping,"

The word "weeping" in verse 38 is the present active participle of the Greek verb *klaiousa*, meaning a gentle weeping. This weeping was not the bawling of a frustrated woman, it was just a gentle, continuous weeping. And remember that Ecclesiastes 3:4 states that "there is a time to weep and a time to dance."

For instance, our Lord wept at the tomb of Lazarus (JOH 11:35).

JOH 11:35, "Jesus wept."

It was a weeping of bereavement indicating our Lord's great capacity for love. He also wept out of patriotism at the coming destruction of Jerusalem.

Luke 19:41, "And when He approached, He saw the city and wept over it."

Our Lord also wept at the Cross (PSA 22, HEB 5:7).

HEB 5:7, "In the days of His flesh, He offered up both prayers and supplications with loud crying and tears to the One able to save him from death, and He was heard because of His piety."

This weeping actually expressed the manliness and maturity of Christ. He could cry and scream out during the horrible event of spiritual death (separation from God) and still be oriented to the grace of God. Returning to our passage, we find the woman weeping.

LUK 7:38, “And standing behind [Him] at His feet, weeping, she began to wet His feet with her tears, and kept wiping them with the hair of her head, and kissing His feet, and anointing them with the perfume.”

This woman was quite feminine and had fantastic humility. And, remember, there is no grace orientation without humility. But, there is no joy for the arrogant individual; he is the most miserable person in the world. In his confusion and delusion, the arrogant legalist tries to “straighten out” someone else. But, in her humility, the woman simply wept for joy at her Savior. Many people think it is disgraceful to be humble, but they are wrong. Humility comes from grace orientation and spiritual self-esteem and provides a most fantastic relaxed mental attitude.

The Greek noun for perfume in verse 38 is *muro* and refers to an expensive perfume. So, the woman used her life’s savings to buy this perfume. Imagine what the legalistic Pharisee thought: once a prostitute, always a prostitute; once a liar, always a liar; once a gossip, always a gossip; and once a failure, always a failure. The Pharisee had no grace in his soul and could not help but be one of the most miserable persons in the world!

Now, the woman was in a difficult situation. She was at a meal attended by many Pharisees. But, overwhelming gratitude flowed from her heart and motivated her to commit an extravagant and lavish act as her expression of thankfulness. Notice that she let down her hair. In Eastern culture, a proper woman kept her hair up in public, but the woman did not care. She used her hair to wipe away her tears from her Savior’s feet and, as she did, she kissed His feet and poured out her precious perfume and her adoring heart.

The perfume was perhaps the most valuable thing she owned, but note that the Lord accepted it. And He was not embarrassed by her act even though she was a “woman of the town.” Also notice that the Pharisee knew this woman!

LUK 7:39a, “Now when the Pharisee who had invited Him saw this, he said to himself [he thought it, he did not speak out loud],”

Now what was the Pharisee thinking? He had derogatory thoughts about Jesus and was probably sorry that he had invited Him. And, as a user, he was already planning to discard Jesus because he could not use a man so intimately associated with a prostitute. His thought was expressed in terms of a protasis in a second-class condition. The protasis (“if”) was his evil premise. The apodasis (“then”) was his evil conclusion. The second-class condition in the Greek connotes “drama contrary to fact.”

LUK 7:39b, “If this man were a prophet [protasis of a second-class condition, but He is not], [then, the apodasis] He would know who and what sort of person this woman is who is touching

Him, that she is a prostitute.”

Now, Isaiah prophesied about just such a situation in Isaiah chapter 65.

ISA 65:1, “I permitted Myself to be sought by those who did not ask [for Me]; I permitted Myself to be found by those who did not seek Me. I said, ‘Here am I, here am I’ to a nation which did not call on My name.”

ISA 65:2, “I have spread out My hands all day long to a rebellious people, Who walk [in] the way which is not good, following their own thoughts,”

ISA 65:3, “A people who continually provoke Me to My face, offering sacrifices in gardens and burning incense on bricks;”

ISA 65:4, “Who sit among graves, and spend the night in secret places; Who eat swine’s flesh, And the broth of unclean meat is [in] their pots.”

ISA 65:5, ““Who say, ‘Keep to yourself, do not come near me, For I am holier than you!’ These are smoke in My nostrils, A fire that burns all the day.”

ISA 65:6, “Behold, it is written before Me, I will not keep silent, but I will repay; I will even repay into their bosom,”

The Pharisee thought to himself that Jesus could not possibly be a prophet since He let such a person touch Him. The Pharisee thought she was doing something terribly wrong, but, in fact, she was doing nothing wrong. The woman’s act was part of Eastern culture at the time and there was absolutely nothing wrong with what she did. Legalistic individuals make wrong assumptions because their thinking is based on self-justification, self-deception, and self-absorption.

PSA 19:13, “Keep back Thy servant from presumptuous sins; Let them [the presumptuous sins] not rule over me; Then I shall be blameless, And I shall be acquitted of great transgression.”

Now, this was a shocking situation. In the ancient world, it was shocking to see a Rabbi even talking to a woman, let alone allowing a woman to kiss His feet in a public place. For instance, our Lord’s disciples were shocked that He would talk to a woman in public as recorded in John chapter 4.

JOH 4:7, “There came a woman of Samaria to draw water. Jesus said to her, ‘Give Me a drink.’”

JOH 4:8, “For His disciples had gone away into the city to buy food.”

JOH 4:9, “The Samaritan woman therefore said to Him, ‘How is it that You, being a Jew, ask me for a drink since I am a Samaritan woman?’ (For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.)”

JOH 4:10, “Jesus answered and said to her, ‘If you knew the gift of God, and Who it is who says to you, Give Me a drink, you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water.’”

JOH 4:11, “She said to Him, ‘Sir, You have nothing to draw with and the well is deep; where\_ then do You get that living water?’”

JOH 4:12, “You are not greater than our father Jacob, are You, who gave us the well, and drank of it himself, and his sons, and his cattle?”

JOH 4:13, “Jesus answered and said to her, ‘Everyone who drinks of this water shall thirst again;’”

JOH 4:14, “But whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall become in him a well of water springing up to eternal life.”

JOH 4:15, “The woman said to Him, ‘Sir, give me this water, so I will not be thirsty, nor come all the way here to draw.’”

JOH 4:16, “He said to her, ‘Go, call your husband, and come here.’”

JOH 4:17, “The woman answered and said, ‘I have no husband.’ Jesus said to her, ‘You have well said, I have no husband;’”

JOH 4:18, “For you have had five husbands, and the one whom you now have is not your husband; this you have said truly.”

JOH 4:19, “The woman said to Him, ‘Sir, I perceive that You are a prophet.’”

JOH 4:20, “Our fathers worshiped in this mountain, and you [people] say that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship.”

JOH 4:21, “Jesus said to her, ‘Woman, believe Me, an hour is coming when neither in this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, shall you worship the Father.’”

JOH 4:22, “You worship that which you do not know; we worship that which we know, for salvation is from the Jews.”

JOH 4:23, “But an hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and truth; for such people the Father seeks to be His worshipers.”

JOH 4:24, “God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.”

JOH 4:25, “The woman said to Him, ‘I know that Messiah is coming (He who is called Christ);

when that One comes, He will declare all things to us.”

JOH 4:26, “Jesus said to her, ‘I who speak to you am [He].’”

JOH 4:27, “And at this point His disciples came, and they marveled that He had been speaking with a woman; yet no one said, ‘What do You seek?’ or ‘Why do You speak with her?’”

Returning to Luke chapter 7, we find the woman crying quietly, wiping our Lord’s feet with her unbound hair, anointing His feet with an expensive perfume, and kissing His feet. In fact, her lips are the only lips, besides those of the traitor Judas, that are recorded in scripture as having kissed the Lord Jesus Christ. So, this woman is doing nothing wrong; in fact, she is doing everything right! And the truly shocking event in our passage is the thinking of the Pharisee. He is a perfect example of Proverbs 23:7.

PRO 23:7, “For as he thinks within himself, so he is. He says to you, ‘Eat and drink!’ But his heart is not with you.”

The Pharisee is a perfect example of the flatterer that the Word of God warns us about in so many passages. Scripture describes the flatterer’s mouth as an open sepulcher and a place of dead flesh.

PSA 5:9, “There is nothing reliable in what they say; Their inward part is destruction [itself]; Their throat is an open grave; They flatter with their tongue.”

PSA 55:21, “His speech was smoother than butter, but his heart was war; His words were softer than oil, Yet they were drawn swords.”

Now, the answer as to why our Lord allowed this woman to minister to Him is found in many passages in the Word of God.

LUK 15:1, “Now all the tax-gatherers and the sinners were coming near Him to listen to Him.”

LUK 15:2, “And both the Pharisees and the scribes [began] to grumble, saying, ‘This man receives sinners and eats with them.’”

MAT 9:10, “And it happened that as He was reclining [at the table] in the house, behold many tax-gatherers and sinners [prostitutes] came and were dining with Jesus and His disciples.”

MAT 9:11, “And when the Pharisees saw [this], they said to His disciples, ‘Why is your Teacher eating with the tax-gatherers and sinners?’”

MAT 9:12, “But when He heard this, He said, ‘[It is] not those who are healthy who need a physician, but those who are sick.’”



MAT 9:13, “But go and learn what [this] means, ‘I desire compassion, and not sacrifice,’ for I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners.”

Now, Simon’s own heart condemned him. He was more concerned that a woman of shady character had entered his house than that she might die without finding her Savior. So, Simon made two prejudgments and both were wrong.

(1) He misjudged the Lord Jesus Christ by expecting Him to condemn the woman instead of forgiving her.

Simon could not conceive anyone treating a sinner differently from the way he would.

(2) He misjudged the woman’s motives and state.

So, the conclusions of Simon the Pharisee were wrong! Rather than thinking what a marvelous event it was to witness the thanksgiving of a person freed from guilt through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, he thought, “If this man were a prophet, He would know who and what sort of person this woman is who is touching Him, that she is a prostitute.” But, like a ventriloquist, he never moved his lips. He had this evil thought, but did not come right out and say it.

LUK 7:40a, “And Jesus answered and said to him,”

Jesus read the Pharisee’s thought and answered his question with a parable. Simon would have died of shock if he had realized that Jesus Christ read his thoughts billions of years ago as God. Simon might as well have shouted what he thought! And this event fulfills such passages as Matthew 10:26 and Luke 12:3.

MAT 10:26, “For there is nothing covered that will not be revealed, and hidden that will not be known.”

LUK 12:3, “Accordingly, whatever you have said in the dark shall be heard in the light, and what you have whispered in the inner rooms shall be proclaimed upon the housetops.”

So, Simon concluded that Jesus could not be a prophet because He had not discerned what kind of woman was touching Him. But, the Lord displayed a greater discernment than knowing the sins of the woman by knowing the thoughts of Simon himself!

LUK 7:40, “And Jesus answered and said to him [answered what Simon did not say out loud], ‘Simon, I have something to say to you.’ And he replied, ‘Say it, Teacher.’”

Then the Lord began a parable.

LUK 7:41, “A certain moneylender had two debtors: one owed five hundred denarii [one denarius was a Roman silver coin usually worth one day’s wage, so this was about 500 days’

worth of wages], and the other fifty.”

LUK 7:42, “When they were unable to repay, he graciously forgave them both. Which of them therefore will love him more?”

Notice that, in verse 42, the moneylender graciously forgave them both. The moneylender did not have to forgive them their debt, but, in grace, he did so. Now, Simon may have been proud, but he was not stupid. He understood Jesus’ parable immediately, but he was hesitant to answer because he realized that his answer would condemn his previous thoughts. So he gave a noncommittal answer.

LUK 7:43a, “Simon answered and said, ‘I suppose the one whom he forgave more.’”

But, in answering truthfully, Jesus’ host condemned himself.

Luke 7:43b, “And He [Jesus] said to him [Simon], ‘You have judged correctly.’”

Now, remember that a parable is an allegorical study designed to convey a truth, a principle, or a doctrine. And, in verses 44-47, Jesus went on to elucidate the truth about the customs of the day.

LUK 7:44, “And turning toward the woman [He did not even look at Simon but He had His back to the Pharisee], He said to Simon, ‘Do you see this woman?’”

Notice the body language: Jesus turned his back on Simon and spoke to Simon. He was looking at the woman, but He did not make an issue out of her former prostitution. And His look was one of appreciation, affirmation, and acceptance.

Have you ever considered the grace of acceptance? Acceptance is the fruit people taste when we show them impersonal love. Acceptance means allowing others to be who they are without disapproval or losing patience with them. Acceptance is an invitation to freedom. Acceptance means you are valuable just as you are. It allows you to be the real you. In acceptance, you are not forced into someone else’s idea of who you are.

With acceptance, you feel safe knowing that no one will pronounce judgment on you even though they do not agree with you. It does not mean you will never be corrected or shown to be wrong; it simply means it is safe to be the real you without someone trying to destroy you out of prejudice. Acceptance can be the most precious gift we give someone – a family member, a fellow believer, or a neighbor. What makes it so valuable? First, acceptance means that we do not have to live in hypocrisy and assume a role we were not meant to fulfill. Secondly, acceptance allows all judgment to rest with the Lord, not us (ROM 14:4,10).

ROM 14:4, “Who are you to judge the servant of another? To his own master he stands or falls; and stand he will, for the Lord is able to make him stand.”

ROM 14:10, “But you, why do you judge your brother? Or you again, why do you regard your brother with contempt? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of God.”

Thirdly, acceptance provides each person the freedom to choose. According to Paul, the choice between two paths in life is often simply a matter of conscience and personal preference.

ROM 14:5, “One man regards one day above another, another regards every day alike. Let each man be fully convinced in his own mind.”

Finally, acceptance helps us focus on essentials, not incidentals. Usually, when we start judging others, it is because we are preoccupied with insignificant incidentals such as the details of life. But, Paul emphasizes the priority of the essentials in Romans 14:17.

ROM 14:17, “For the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.”

And impersonal love regulates our scale of values to align with our Lord’s standards. With the acceptance based in impersonal love, we begin to see people as He does. Love regulates our scales to our Lord’s standard of measure. We open our hearts as He opens His. So, we should freely accept others just as He accepted the self-righteous Pharisee and the broken prostitute. And, though Jesus Christ accepted Simon the Pharisee just as he was, our Lord did correct him with the truth by explaining the parable.

LUK 7:44, “Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave Me no water for My feet, but she has wet My feet with her tears, and wiped them with her hair.”

So, who followed good manners, the aristocratic Pharisee or the former prostitute? In effect, under their culture, she had class; Simon, however, was a jerk.

LUK 7:45a, “You gave Me no kiss;”

A kiss, as we have already noted, was a customary welcome or greeting to an honored guest. The woman knew the right thing to do and she did it.

LUK 7:45, “You gave Me no kiss; but she, since the time I came in, has not ceased to kiss My feet.”

The woman had the good manners in this account. She was humble and she was grace-oriented. She actually followed the customs of the day for an honored guest. Often, however, self-righteous individuals are ill-mannered. So, Simon omitted the usual courtesies for his guest, likely out of disrespect.

LUK 7:46, “You did not anoint My head with oil, but she anointed My feet with perfume.”

LUK 7:47, “For this reason I say to you, her sins, which are many, have been forgiven, for she loved much; but he who is forgiven little, loves little.”

Now, verse 47 begins with the phrase “for this reason” which in the Greek is *hou charin*. *Charin* is the accusative form of *charis*. And *charis* is the Greek word for grace. So, we could translate this phrase “for this gracious reason.”

LUK 7:47, “For this gracious reason I say to you, her sins, which are many, have been forgiven, for she loved much;”

Moreover, the phrase “have been forgiven” is the perfect passive indicative of the Greek verb *apheontai* and, in the intensive perfect, means that she was forgiven in the past with the result that she has already been saved. So, the moment the prostitute believed in Christ, her sins were forgiven forever. So why did the woman do the things she did?

LUK 7:47b, “For she loved much;”

“For she loved much” is the culminative aorist active indicative of *agapao* which is *egapesen*. The culminative aorist tense views an event that occurred in the past which has results that continue from that point forward. In other words, the woman loved the Lord in the past and still does. The indicative mood indicates that the woman produces the action of the verb and is the mood of a dogmatic statement of doctrine.

LUK 7:47, “For this reason I say to you, her sins, which are many, have been forgiven, for she loved much;”

So, love may motivate an individual to do extravagant things. And, realization of the tremendous debt that has been forgiven motivates a person to love all the more!

LUK 7:47, “For this reason I say to you, her sins, which are many, have been forgiven, for she loved much; but he who is forgiven little [like you, Simon], loves little.”

So, the woman loved the Lord Jesus Christ much, but Simon the Pharisee never really got around to loving Him. When an individual such as Simon believes that he is better than others, he will love little.

So, we see a principle – a person’s love for God is usually proportionate to his realization of the tremendous debt paid by the Lord Jesus Christ on the Cross on his behalf.

Now, in truth, we know that God deserves personal love because of Who and What He is, even apart from what He has done for us. But it is proper that our love for God should be intensified by a debt of gratitude for what He has done for us. And, the more we have been forgiven, the more gratitude is felt. So, the woman’s sins were many, but they were forgiven and her debt of gratitude was great.

LUK 12:48, “And from everyone who has been given much shall much be required; and to whom they entrusted much, of him they will ask all the more.”

Likewise, from whom much has been forgiven, much will be expressed. So, the woman was standing before the Lord Jesus Christ knowing that she deserved absolutely nothing in and of herself, but had been given the greatest gift – the forgiveness of her sins. But Simon the Pharisee was sitting there not knowing the enormity of his own sinfulness and wrong actions because pride and arrogance had blinded and paralyzed him. And, we find the Lord Jesus Christ sandwiched between these two opposites, drawing an analogy between them.

LUK 7:48, “And He said to her, ‘Your sins have been forgiven.’”

When Jesus told her that her sin had been forgiven, He used the Doric Greek form of the verb *apheontai* in the perfect passive indicative form indicating that she was already a spiritual winner or conqueror. Now, the Dorians were a group of Greek individuals who were considered to be barbarians around the seventh century B.C. They later became the Spartans. Their culture was a culture of warfare and their language was a language of conquest.

LUK 7:48, “And He said to her, “Your sins have been forgiven.”

Imagine what this meant to the woman. These were the most wonderful words she would ever hear. Her sins had already been forgiven and she was a spiritual conqueror. What a relief! What release! Her shame was erased. She was free from her past.

LUK 7:49, “And those who were reclining [at the table] with Him began to say to themselves, ‘Who is this [man] who even forgives sins?’”

So, the rest of the people at the banquet were thinking, “Who does he think he is that he can forgive sins?” They were as negative towards the Gospel as Simon was even though they had the same opportunity to believe in Jesus Christ as the woman did. Instead of thinking how wonderful it was that the woman was transformed by her relationship with our Lord, they were critical of Him.

LUK 7:50, “And He said [face to face to the woman with His back on the legalistic Pharisees], ‘Your faith has saved you; go in peace.’”

The phrase “has saved” is the perfect active indicative of the Greek verb *sozo* and indicates the eternal security of the believer; this provides motivation for spiritual growth. Then, so that the woman would not experience harm, Jesus commanded her to “go in peace.”

The phrase “go in peace” is the present active imperative of the Greek verb *poreuou* and is a command to go away or depart. Why did Jesus command her to depart while the others still reclined at the table? Because negative, arrogant, legalistic people are dangerous. So, the happiest person in the city that day was the one who left the courtyard forgiven and free.

As we find the woman departing Simon's home, a few more principles become evident. Simon's walled-off courtyard of self-righteousness should remind us that pride and arrogance paralyze us. It deadens us to our need for a savior and numbs us to the gratitude we should have towards God. And the sobbing woman's peace should remind us that forgiveness gives us release. We are happiest when we grasp that we are forgiven, free of spiritual debt, free of guilt, and free of shame. Finally, our Lord's acceptance of the woman should remind us that faith in Him delivers us.

Because of her love for Christ, the woman flew to the Pharisee's house to offer her sweet gift. She risked ridicule and disgrace, but she came anyway. So, in essence, this is faith – coming to the Lord Jesus Christ. And, when we do come to Him, we know He will accept us just as we are. Now, was it her works that caused her to be saved? No, those works were the result of her faith. Her good deeds, her lavished love, came from a heart that had been changed. So, Jesus said, "Your faith has saved you." But, if you have been graciously forgiven like this woman, what rhyme or reason do you have for holding something against someone else? Let it go!

## **Chapter 6**

### **Two Rebels Under One Roof**

Let us examine another popular story in the Word of God to illustrate another principle concerning God's solution to guilt based on His grace and forgiveness. It is a story about a young man who decided to make a life for himself without God. He was a man who felt that his life was fading away and that something was missing in his life that he hoped the world could offer him. This man is often called the prodigal son, and his account is found in Luke chapter 15.

First, notice the audience and setting of this account.

LUK 15:1, "Now all the tax-gatherers and the sinners [prostitutes] were coming near Him to listen to Him."

LUK 15:2, "And both the Pharisees and the scribes [began] to grumble, saying, 'This man receives sinners [prostitutes] and eats with them.'"

So we have an audience of tax-gatherers, sinners (including prostitutes), Pharisees, and scribes – a very interesting combination for a congregation. Two more different groups could not have gathered together.

First, there were those who were unashamed, unforgiven, overt sinners described as tax-gatherers and sinners. They might be described as "detestable" sinners. They had nothing to hide. They were open and out front with their sinfulness. But, they were attracted to the Lord Jesus Christ because they did not feel intimidated or judged by Him. In fact, they felt accepted. So, they came into His presence to listen.

Then, there were those who stood by with their arms folded and frowning as they came, not to listen, but to grumble and judge. They were the Pharisees and scribes. They might be described as the "respectable" sinners. They were proud, self-righteous, and judgmental. They were not comfortable around our Lord, but they came to grumble and criticize.

LUK 15:2, "And both the Pharisees and the scribes came to grumble,"

Now, in Luke chapter 15, Jesus taught three parables about things that were lost – lost sheep in Luke 15:4-7, the lost coin in Luke 15:8-10, and the lost sons in Luke 15:11-32. In each story, something loved and treasured was lost. And, in each case, that which was lost was found, bringing great rejoicing to the one who had lost it.

So, the parable of the lost son ranks among the finest teaching in all of Scripture. The myriad applications from this parable are evident from the many titles it has been given – The Lost Son, The Two Lost Sons, The Waiting Father, The Parable of Divine Mercy, God's Love for the Lost, and The Lost Son and the Dutiful Son.

So, the prodigal son is the emblem of a sinner who refuses to depend on the Lord and allow the Lord to govern him. And, in this parable, we will see how dangerous it is to desire to be at our own disposal, living in a state of independence from God as our own rulers.

LUK 15:11, “And He said, ‘A certain man had two sons;’”

LUK 15:12, “And the younger of them said to his father, ‘Father, give me the share of the estate that falls to me.’ And he divided his wealth between them.”

LUK 15:13, “And not many days later, the younger son gathered everything together and went on a journey into a distant country, and there he squandered his estate with loose living.”

LUK 15:14, “Now when he had spent everything, a severe famine occurred in that country, and he began to be in need.”

LUK 15:15, “And he went and attached himself to one of the citizens of that country, and he sent him into his fields to feed swine.”

LUK 15:16, “And he was longing to fill his stomach with the pods that the swine were eating, and no one was giving [anything] to him.”

LUK 15:17, “But when he came to his senses, he said, ‘How many of my father’s hired men have more than enough bread, but I am dying here with hunger!’”

LUK 15:18, “I will get up and go to my father, and will say to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in your sight;’”

LUK 15:19, “I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me as one of your hired men.”

LUK 15:20, “And he got up and came to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him, and felt compassion [for him], and ran and embraced him, and kissed him.”

LUK 15:21, “And the son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.’”

LUK 15:22, “But the father said to his slaves, ‘Quickly bring out the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet;’”

LUK 15:23, “And bring the fattened calf, kill it, and let us eat and be merry;”

LUK 15:24, “‘For this son of mine was dead, and has come to life again; he was lost, and has been found.’ And they began to be merry.”

LUK 15:25, “Now his older son was in the field, and when he came and approached the house,



he heard music and dancing.”

LUK 15:26, “And he summoned one of the servants and [began] inquiring what these things might be.”

LUK 15:27, “And he said to him, ‘Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fattened calf, because he has received him back safe and sound.’”

LUK 15:28, “But he became angry, and was not willing to go in; and his father came out and [began] entreating him.”

LUK 15:29, “But he answered and said to his father, ‘Look! For so many years I have been serving you, and I have never neglected a command of yours; and [yet] you have never given me a kid, that I might be merry with my friends;’”

LUK 15:30, “But when this son of yours came, who has devoured your wealth with harlots, you killed the fattened calf for him.”

LUK 15:31, “And he said to him, ‘[My] child, you have always been with me, and all that is mine is yours.’”

LUK 15:32, “But we had to be merry and rejoice, for this brother of yours was dead and [has begun] to live, and [was] lost and has been found.”

Now the parable actually has four scenes. In the first scene, the younger son is home, but he is dissatisfied.

LUK 15:11, “And He said, ‘A certain man had two sons;’”

Notice that they are both his sons; they are his sons when the story begins and both will be his sons when this passage finishes. The younger son is the obvious one to condemn because of his overt sin, but, more than anything else, he was foolish. And, in fact, the older son was worse because of his legalism and lack of grace orientation. However, despite all that takes place in the parable, both remain sons of the father.

Now, the man in this parable represents God the Father and the sons represent believers; therefore, this is not a gospel message, it is a doctrinal message for born-again believers. So, we could entitle this parable the Story of Two Rebels Under One Roof.

LUK 15:12a, “And the younger of them [the prodigal son, prodigal means to waste your life away], said to his father,”

Now, note again that the prodigal son called him “father” because the prodigal son represents a person who is a believer.

LUK 15:12b, “Father, give me the share of the estate that falls to me.”

According to Deuteronomy 21:17, a Jewish father had the option of releasing his inheritance before his death. In the case of a man who had two sons, he would give the oldest son two thirds of his estate and the younger son would receive one third of the estate.

DEU 21:17, “But he shall acknowledge the first-born by giving him a double portion of all that he has,”

And notice in our passage that the father not only gave the inheritance to the prodigal son, but also gave the elder son his inheritance. So, each son received his share of the estate.

LUK 15:12c, “And he divided his wealth between them.”

The older brother and the younger brother both received a share of the estate. Each son received enough inheritance so that he was independently wealthy. This fact represents the doctrine of logistical grace support in a believer’s life.

Now, the prodigal son did what most believers do. He accepted the blessings of the father, but he turned his back upon the father and went on to live a self-centered life. And notice that the father made no attempt to stop him; the father did not try to abrogate his volition. In essence, the father said, “If you must leave, then go.”

So, a principle is evident – God does not violate our free will; He does not force us to remain in fellowship with Him.

LUK 15:13a, “And not many days later,”

Likely the father and younger son had a long conversation, but in the end the son made a decision to leave and embark on a frantic search for happiness apart from his father.

LUK 15:13, “And not many days later, the younger son gathered everything together and went on a journey into a distant country, [this is analogous to life in the cosmic system or worldliness] and there he squandered his estate with loose living.”

The word for “loose” in verse 13 is the Greek adjective *asotos*, which means lacking moral restraint, indulging in sensual pleasures, and to be reckless and wasteful. In verse 30, the older brother accused the prodigal son of spending his time on “harlots,” but this is gossip since the older son did not witness what the younger son did while away. But the point of verse 13 is that the prodigal son squandered all that he had inherited. He spent everything; he was broke!

So, it did not take long for the younger son to pack up and leave his father. And notice that it was the son who left the father, not the father abandoning the son. And this is what happens when a believer lives a life of sin – we draw away from God, He does not draw away from us. James

addressed this issue in James 4:8.

JAM 4:8, “Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners [rebound]; and purify your hearts [perceive doctrine], you double-minded.”

So, the prodigal son started off with more money than he had possessed in his entire life so far. He had pockets full of money and a head filled with dreams.

LUK 15:14, “Now when he had spent everything [he is not investing, he is just spending], a severe famine occurred in that country, and he began to be in need.”

The famine was a part of the divine discipline which God brought on the prodigal son. Recall that the divine discipline of a believer is intended to drive the believer back to God and restore fellowship of the believer with God (HEB 12:4-11). So, when a believer goes astray, he will eventually reach a point where he is in great need.

So the prodigal son (a believer in the family of God), having forsaken his father (who represents God the Father in our passage), is faced with nothing but poverty, misery, and want.

And all of this points to a principle – the human soul is empty if God does not fill it (ECC 3:11).

The famine represents the fact that there is a famine in every heart when the Word of God does not nourish it. There is always a famine in the heart when a person moves away from God. So, when the famine hit, the wayward son began to be in need and he could not even find a job. Before this time he had never known hunger because his loving father always provided for him, the father he turned his back on! So, no matter what he tried, he failed. Now, notice what he finally did.

LUK 15:15, “And he went and attached himself to one of the citizens of that country, and he sent him into his fields to feed swine.”

Finally, he did find a job – feeding pigs on a farm.

The word “attached” in verse 15 is the Greek verb *kollao* and means to “glue” or closely unite with something. And the “something” that the prodigal son glued himself to was a citizen of a foreign country. The foreign country represents Satan’s cosmic system, so that the wayward son became a miserable slave of the devil’s world.

ISA 30:1, “‘Woe to the rebellious children,’ declares the Lord, ‘Who execute a plan, but not Mine, And make an alliance, but not of My Spirit, In order to add sin to sin;’”

ISA 30:2, “Who proceed down to Egypt [Egypt represents the ways of the world or the cosmic system], Without consulting Me, To take refuge in the safety of Pharaoh [Satanic viewpoint], And to seek shelter in the shadow of Egypt [the world system]!”

ISA 30:3, “Therefore the safety of Pharaoh [Satanic viewpoint] will be your shame, And the shelter in the shadow of Egypt [the ways of the world are called a shadow because, in reality, they are a shadow, something without substance], your humiliation.”

The further a believer goes from God, the nearer he comes to being a slave to the devil. And there is no master as cruel as the devil. There is no burden as heavy as that of bondage and sin. There is no slavery as nasty as slavery to the old sin nature and the carnal, shameful passions of the flesh.

Often, times of distress lead to self-examination, and God uses these times to bring about changes or repentance (a change of attitude) in an individual’s life. However, this young man still held on to the belief that he could maintain his self-sufficiency and his separation from his father even though it meant complete humiliation.

This parable describes the depths to which the prodigal son had sunk. His empty state was illustrated by the job he was forced to take, feeding swine. There was no job worse than feeding pigs for a Jew. Under Jewish law, pigs were considered unclean animals, and the Mosaic Law expressly forbade contact with swine (LEV 11:7, DEU 14:8).

LUK 15:16, “And he was longing to fill his stomach with the pods or the slop that the pigs were eating, and no one was giving [anything] to him.”

Now, the prodigal son was starving because he would not be paid until the pigs were sold at market. His predicament illustrates what happens when a believer goes back to the lifestyle from which God rescued him.

2PE 2:22, “It has happened to them according to the true proverb, ‘A dog returns to its own vomit,’ and, ‘A sow, after washing, returns to wallowing in the mire.’”

So, notice the humiliation that the younger brother endured. Gone were the fine robes and the rich food of his life with his father. He was performing the filthiest of jobs according to Jewish law. And his hunger was so great that he considered filling his own belly with the pig slop. The food that he was feeding the pigs, called pods, made passable livestock food, but despicable human food. Even that food was unavailable for the prodigal son, so even the detestable pigs were eating better than him.

It is interesting that the freedom the wayward son dreamed of and the reality of his independence were so different. And, by application, this is true for the believer when he lives in the flesh, independent from God. But, the father did not abandon the son; the son left the father. There was not one sunset since the younger son had left that the father did not look longingly towards the glow on the horizon hoping to see the outline of the son returning. Not one sun had set without the father praying fervently for the safe return of his son.

LUK 15:17a, “But when he [the prodigal son] came to his senses,”

And so this man finally viewed his situation honestly and looked at his life from a biblical perspective, which meant to face up to the situation as it really existed, to recognize the sins in his own life, to stop rationalizing or justifying them, to stop blaming others for them, and to come to a point where he acknowledged them and recognized that they were wrong and contrary to the Word of God. Now, remember, this is not a parable about what happens to a believer when he sins; this is a parable about what happens to a believer when he changes his lifestyle.

LUK 15:17a, “But when he came to his senses,”

Now what does this tell us? He has been out of his mind! He went a little crazy, we would say! But finally, he realized the absurdity of his situation, being destitute and completely broke.

LUK 15:17, “But when he came to his senses, he said [or thought to himself], ‘How many of my father’s hired men have more than enough bread, but I am dying here with hunger starving to death!’”

So, the younger son understood that the hired servants in his father’s household were far better off than he. And the realization of the hopeless and useless predicament of a sinful lifestyle is the first step towards true repentance for a believer. He must see that his own actions have led him away from his loving Father. He must realize that the seeming pleasures of the sinful life are empty and unsatisfying, while life with the Father is full and rich. The believer must understand that a life of sin offers only destruction, while life with the Father offers prosperity and happiness. But, until an individual is convicted of the reality that he travels a dead-end road of sin and separation, true repentance cannot occur.

And the wayward son realized that his father’s servants were better off than him, so he decided to go home and ask his father to take him back into the household as a servant. His pain and suffering was actually a good thing because pain brings reality into a rebellious heart. Some lessons are never learned without the presence of pain!

PSA 119:67, “Before I was afflicted I went astray, But now I keep Thy word.”

PSA 119:68, “Thou art good and doest good; Teach me Thy statutes.”

PSA 119:69, “The arrogant have forged a lie against me; With all [my] heart I will observe Thy precepts.”

PSA 119:70, “Their heart is covered with fat [denoting prosperity], [But] I delight in Thy law.”

PSA 119:71, “It is good for me that I was afflicted, That I may learn Thy statutes.”

PSA 119:72 “The law of Thy mouth is better to me Than thousands of gold and silver [pieces].”

PSA 119:73, “Thy hands made me and fashioned me; Give me understanding, that I may learn

Thy commandments.”

PSA 119:74, “May those who fear Thee see me and be glad, Because I wait for Thy word.”

PSA 119:75, “I know, O Lord, that Thy judgments are righteous, And that in faithfulness Thou hast afflicted me.”

The point made in this part of Psalm 119 is that some life lessons are never fully learned without the bottom dropping out first. This is sometimes how reality sets in and brings back sanity to the wayward believer.

LUK 15:17, “But when he came to his senses, he said [or thought to himself], ‘How many of my father’s hired men have more than enough bread, but I am dying here with hunger starving to death!’”

So, the prodigal son began to hear his own voice telling him the truth.

LUK 15:18, “I will get up and go to my father, and will say to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight [rebound, 1JO 1:9];’”

But, then, as so many individuals do, the wayward son added emotional nonsense motivated by his guilt to his rebound with his father.

LUK 15:19, “I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me as one of your hired men.”

His statement in verse 19 was emotional and asinine. And, when a person adds something to rebound, it is meaningless, even ridiculous. In verse 19, the younger son made an issue of himself, which is sheer arrogance. The issue in rebound is the sin that was committed. In rebound, the sinner simply names or cites the sin to God – period!

So, the prodigal son’s problem shifted from loose living to arrogance motivated by guilt. Of course, the son was not worthy. All of us, in and of ourselves, are not worthy of God. Moreover, God knew this predicament billions and billions of years ago in eternity past. So, God authored a plan to make us His worthy sons through faith in Jesus Christ. And the doctrine of eternal security assures believers that we will always be His sons, no matter what may happen. Whether we are worthy or unworthy does not change our relationship with Him.

LUK 15:19, “I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me as one of your hired men.”

So, the wayward son’s plan is to ask his father to treat him like a hired hand. This request is actually an insult to his father; it implies that his father has no integrity and that his father has no capacity to forgive.

ISA 30:1, “‘Woe to the rebellious children,’ declares the Lord, ‘Who execute a plan, but not

Mine, And make an alliance, but not of My Spirit, In order to add sin to sin;”

So, it is not too long before the prodigal son was headed for home.

LUK 15:20a, “And he got up and came to his Father. But while he was still a long way off,”

Now, notice that his father was a wonderful person, and his response to seeing his son coming home is a magnificent illustration of how God the Father deals with us. His father saw him while he was a long way off. Verse 20 implies that his father had been looking for him.

ISA 65:24, “It will also come to pass that before they call, I will answer;”

PSA 56:8, “Thou hast taken account of my wanderings; Put my tears in Thy bottle; Are they not in Thy book?”

God knows each and every heartache and difficulty an individual will ever face. Whether a situation is the individual’s fault or the fault of someone else is not the issue with God. For God the Father, the issue is coming back home. And the earthly father in our parable illustrated God’s gracious attitude. He is not interested in his son’s idiotic speech about worthiness.

LUK 15:20b, “His father saw him, and felt compassion [for him], and ran and embraced him, and kissed him.”

The wayward son’s father was filled with compassion and ran to embrace his son. His father threw his arms around him and kissed him again and again.

One time President Lincoln was asked how he was going to treat the rebellious Southerners when they had finally been defeated and returned to the union of the United States. The questioner expected that Lincoln would take dire vengeance. But, he answered, “I will treat them as if they had never been away.”

So, while man often sets up a system of probation for those who have strayed, God takes the sinner back immediately. All it takes to restore our fellowship with God is to ask (LUK 18:13).

LUK 18:13, “God, be merciful to me, the sinner!”

When will we learn that it is man who judges others’ guilt, but it is God who forgives others unconditionally and accepts and affirms them?

LUK 15:21a, “And the son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight [rebound];’”

And while this statement was proper, the son should not have said anything else. But, he did.

LUK 15:21b, “I am no longer worthy to be called your son.”

And that is as far as the son got in his speech because of the gracious attitude of his father. He was not allowed to continue with the nonsense such as “make me as one of your hired men.”

LUK 15:22, “But the Father said to his slaves, ‘Quickly bring out the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet;’”

Is this the action of a father who thinks his son is unworthy? No! Instead, the father’s actions illustrate the results of rebound with our Father including forgiveness of guilt and restoration to fellowship with Him. The best robe was a symbol of honor and respect and it represented restoration to full experiential righteousness. The signet ring was the ancient world’s equivalent of a platinum credit card with immense resources. The ring illustrates God’s logistical grace support for us. And the sandals illustrate the restored opportunity for production and service to our Father. Furthermore, a lack of sandals was a sign of abject poverty and slavery. So, the son was once in slavery, but now he is free.

LUK 15:23, “And bring the fattened calf, kill it, and let us eat [have a feast or a party] and be merry [celebrate];”

The fattened calf illustrates fellowship in the Word, that is, feeding on divine truth or Bible doctrine (MAT 4:4). So, through this parable, we perceive the divine attitude of grace when an individual returns to fellowship with God. And, rather than punishing the younger son, the father throws a party for him. And everyone in the community comes except for one.

LUK 15:24, “‘For this son of mine was dead [which means temporal death, loss of fellowship because of involvement in the cosmic system], and has come to life again; he was lost, and has been found.’ And they began to be merry.”

The wayward son wanted to do penance. He wanted to make it up to his father, to compensate for his wrong decisions. However, the father had no intention of making the son a hired servant. He did not say, “This boy needs a lesson, so I will give him some nasty job such as cleaning the stables. He deserves to pay for his offenses and sins!” Instead, the father’s attitude was to have the best robe brought and put on his son. The father feared that his son had died, so he prepared a feast for his son’s life. But, what about the older brother?

LUK 15:25, “Now his older son was in the field [a hard worker], and when he came and approached the house, he heard music and dancing.”

Now, we must realize that there are Pharisees in the audience as Jesus gave this parable. And those Pharisees were legalistic. For legalistic individuals, there is no place for music and dancing. They would proclaim that they do not do that; they work!

LUK 15:26. “And he [the older son] summoned one of the servants and [began] inquiring what



these things might be.”

It is interesting that none of the servants went out to the field and told the older son that a party was in progress. Perhaps they realized that the presence of just one self-righteous legalist would destroy the party. So, the older brother questioned the servants outside and did not go in. This action reveals something about his personality. He was a bit devious as many self-righteous prigs are. They are dishonest; they do not level with others. They are shifty and try to be clever.

LUK 15:27, “And he [the servant] said to him [the elder son], ‘Your brother has come [or has returned], and your Father has killed the fattened calf, because he has received him back safe and sound.’”

Now, the older brother should have been delighted to have his younger brother back. He should have had an attitude of grace and thrown his arms around his younger brother and said, “Welcome home, brother; I am glad you have returned.” Instead, the older brother reacted in self-righteous anger.

LUK 15:28, “But he became angry, and was not willing to go in; and his Father came out and [began] entreating him.”

Now, remember that this parable is primarily directed towards those individuals listed in Luke 15:1, tax-gatherers and prostitutes. And, recall in verse 2, that the Pharisees and scribes began to grumble, saying, “This man receives sinners and eats with them.” The believer who is arrogant hates to see other believers become successful. But, the believer who is humble is delighted to see others forgiven and restored to fellowship with God. So, when an individual cannot stand to see others prosper, he is in trouble.

LUK 15:28a, “But he became angry,”

Thus, we find the older brother taking his own journey into a far country. Suddenly, he was the brother who was out of fellowship with his father. The older brother moved from self-righteous arrogance to mental arrogance.

The Father had the right to treat each child as he thought best. By application, we have no right to get angry at the way that our Father treats another believer in grace. And, remember that the shoe of failure may be on your foot someday. Then, you will want to be treated graciously by the Father without others questioning or judging you.

But, the older brother was jealous and he became angry because his father had treated his younger brother in grace. Therefore, he sulked outside and would not go into the house even though his father begged him to come in and join the party. The father’s action illustrates God the Father’s attitude towards all believers; He desires for us to be restored to fellowship with Him. And, we should have the same attitude towards other believers. We should not penalize them for their failures. We should have an attitude of grace. We should not, in our arrogance,

judge them, but have compassion for them.

LUK 15:29, “But he answered and said to his Father, ‘Look [by not addressing his father as “father” indicated disrespect in those days], for so many years I have been serving you [he did not know what being a son really meant], and I have never neglected a command of yours [he is being a little weasel right now; he is a Pharisee]; and [yet] you have never given me a kid, that I might be merry with my friends;”

Notice all of the “I”s, “my”s and “me”s in verse 29 – “For so many years **I** have been serving you, and **I** have never neglected a command of yours; and [yet] you have never given **me** a kid or a goat, that **I** might be merry or entertain with **my** friends;”

LUK 15:30a, “But when this son of yours came.”

Notice the old brother does not say “my brother.” Instead, he says “this son of yours.” Now, is there any sin worse than pride?

LUK 15:30, “But when this son of yours came, who has devoured your wealth with harlots, you killed the fattened calf for him.”

He is judging, maligning, and slandering the younger son. He does not know how his brother spent his money. Note that, in this parable, harlots are not specifically mentioned. Now, what is going on here? Perhaps, the older brother was the one who would have spent his money on harlots and prostitutes. And, in transference arrogance, he accused the younger brother of the very action he would have committed if he had the opportunity.

Such an attitude is the antithesis of grace. The elder son revealed that his years of obedience were a grim duty, not a loving service. This was the attitude of the Pharisees, an attitude of self-righteous legalism. And, often, the legalist spends many moments in his life in lust to do the very things he condemns.

LUK 15:31, “And he [the father] said to him [the elder son], ‘[My] child [an affectionate term from the father], you have always been with me, and all that is mine is yours.’”

LUK 15:32, “But we had to be merry and rejoice, [and look how the father corrects him] for this brother of yours [here the father reminds the elder son that the younger son is his brother] was dead [a reference to temporal death] and [has begun] to live, and [was] lost [out of fellowship] and has been found.”

The father said, “My son was dead, but now he is alive; he was lost, but now he is found.” And the sad thing is that we never find out what happened to the older brother! So, this parable is a story of the grace of God. The gates of death will never shut on a person until the gates of grace have opened for him over and over again. Today, your Father views you from His throne in heaven and runs to you with the message of forgiveness and compassion and says, as our Lord

did in Luke 7:47, “Your sins, which are many, have been forgiven.”

Our Lord’s gracious attitude towards us is marvelously illustrated by this parable. The father was saying to this elder son who thought that forgiveness must be earned, that kindness must be deserved, that sin must be punished, and that repentance must be proven, “Put your arms around your brother and, in grace, receive him back.” What a gentle, gracious father!

So never forget, this was a parable of two rebels under one roof. They carried out their rebellion in contrasting ways. Similarly, there are two kinds of rebels in every church. Some openly rebel in shameless and, often, detestable ways. Others rebel deceitfully in self-righteousness, often too proud to let the truth be known. One was a prodigal sinner; the other was a pharisaical hypocrite. Both require grace. Both can be forgiven by God and restored to fellowship with the Father.

## Appendix A

### THE DOCTRINE OF GUILT

#### A. Definition and Description.

Guilt is a feeling of responsibility or remorse for some real or imaged offense. As such, it may not constitute sin. But, as a part of the emotional complex of sins, guilt becomes morbid self-reproach and emotional feelings of culpability for real or imagined offenses. Such guilt brings out a sense of inadequacy that is dangerous, because it leads to arrogant preoccupation with the correctness of one's behavior derived from self-righteous arrogance. The greatest of all the problems related to personal rejection is the guilt that may ensue.

#### B. Guilt Related to Repression, Denial, Projection, and Manipulation.

1. Repression, denial, projection, and manipulation often cause the sin of guilt. The weak control the strong through manipulation by stipulation.

a. Repression is the rejection from the stream of consciousness of painful and disagreeable ideas, memories, feelings, and impulses. Repression puts garbage in the subconscious and sinful guilt in the stream of consciousness.

b. Guilt often results from being manipulated by some self-righteous or arrogant Christian. Guilt becomes a sin when the believer rebounds but fails to forget those things which are behind and reach forth toward those things which are before (Phil 3:13-14).

c. Experiences involving guilt or shame are likely to be repressed to form garbage in the subconscious, but they also have a tremendous effect upon the volition and decisions that are made during interactions with people.

d. Guilt involves the failure to use the problem-solving devices, so that outside pressures of adversity are converted to internal stress in the soul. This results in painful anxieties which are repressed, but do not lose their dynamic drive and tension.

e. Guilt uses repression as a primary defense against anxieties, fears, and worries, instead of using the problem-solving devices available.

2. Reaction to feelings of guilt utilizes defense mechanisms to cope with guilt.

a. Repression -- this is how we accumulate garbage in the subconscious.

- b. Dissociation -- this is how we get disorganized (fragmented) in the stream of consciousness.
- c. Denial -- this is how we have a false perception of reality, especially as it pertains to people.
- d. Projection -- this is when we begin to assign to our rejecters or others our own flaws or failures.

Feelings of guilt that cause anxiety may be alleviated by a contrived defense mechanism of blaming others for one's shameful and evil flaws. By projection, a person with a guilt complex that lowers self-esteem falsely attributes his own flaws, unacknowledged feelings, impulses, or thoughts to the rejecter. By blaming others for one's emotional sins and guilt-producing impulses, the believer uses projection to leave himself guiltless and even victimized. If you can make the other party feel guilty through projection, then you feel less guilty. This is the evil of manipulation by the weak to control the strong.

(1) Often the rejected motivates the rejecter, so that the real rejected is the rejecter who is simply functioning under some separation. On the other hand, it may be a real rejection, so that the rejected now has to deal with the problems of the rejecter.

(2) The rejected might be all right, all wrong, partially right, or partially wrong. The rejecter might be all right, all wrong, partially right, or partially wrong. Who is at fault? The one who finally had enough and rejected the other or the one who motivated the rejection? An individual must decide this for himself before the Lord.

(3) You can be right in being rejected and wrong in how you react. You can be right as the rejecter and wrong in how you function.

3. Guilt produces restitutions. Restitutions is a mechanic of relieving the mind of the burden of guilt through reparation or acts of restitution ("making it up to God"). Restitutions becomes a primary motivation in life without utilization of the problem-solving devices.

4. The believer may react with hostility and aggressive behavior toward the object of projection. Projection is another defense mechanism against anxiety. Projection is actually a means of denial. Examples include:

a. Believer A is the rejected and is unable to tolerate the anxiety aroused by his own hatred toward the rejecter (believer B). Believer A assumes he is rejected; therefore, he develops antagonism or hatred toward believer B. Believer A is very self-righteous and cannot even tolerate himself because of this hatred. So believer A handles the problem by making a subconscious change of attitude. Believer A changes his attitude from "I hate B" to "B hates me." This shift in attitude is a defense mechanism to alleviate anxiety. Repression and projection protect the ego from being overwhelmed or disorganized by the effects of the sins of hatred, antagonism, and guilt. Guilt in an individual may be assuaged by attaching to others the very motives that created the problems in the first place.

b. Believer A rejects believer B through manipulation by stipulation. Believer B reacts and rejects believer A. This results in believer A being shocked.

5. Another problem is the sweet believer. Some people have a natural sweetness which has nothing to do with the spiritual life. Sweetness is often a facade for a person who is self-fragmented and already in Christian degeneracy. We should not confuse the spiritual life with an individual's natural attributes. Neither the filling of the Holy Spirit nor Bible doctrine produces natural sweetness. Excessive sweetness or amiability may conceal a very arrogant, self-righteous, intensely hostile person.

6. A self-righteous facade of being injured, of being unjustly treated, or of being a victim of cruelty or unfairness can disguise feelings of rejection when, in reality, the mask of being rejected is a disguise for a person who is rotten to the core. To deny and disguise personality traits involving the sins of arrogance and the sins of the emotional complex of the soul not only requires denial and rejection, but demands projection -- you have to assign these traits to others.

7. Another problem is compensation. Compensation involves a mental process by which the rejected believer not only becomes blind to his undesirable characteristics from the sin nature, but also develops, designs, stimulates, and makes a pretense of spirituality.

This is the believer who assumes the appearance of a spiritual giant, while the inner reality of his soul is that of an arrogant, insolent, overbearing, spiritual midget. He persuades others that he is the victim, when in reality, he is the problem. If the rejected believer is weak, he will develop a massive guilt complex, so that he feels like a legitimate victim. Therefore, projection reinforces the martyrdom complex assumed by the rejected. Part of the martyrdom complex is the feeling of guilt which gives rise to feelings of anxiety that must be alleviated. If the rejected believer can cast the blame for his shameful tendencies on the rejecter, then there is (improper) alleviation of his guilt. The attitude of the rejected person is that he is guiltless, victimized, persecuted, and subjected to martyrdom. This attitude is derived from the motivation that, if you can make the rejecter feel guilty, you feel less guilty as a phony rejected. In this way, the rejected believer can shift all of the blame to the rejecter, which means the rejected can hold the rejecter responsible for the entire situation for that moment and for the rest of his life. Thinking to yourself, "I am a victim; I have been wronged" is scar tissue in the soul (EPH 4:19) that destroys and covers up metabolized doctrine in the stream of consciousness.

8. Another problem related to guilt is delusions of grandeur and emotional instability.

a. Delusions of grandeur originate from feelings of inadequacy, insecurity, or inferiority. The rejected believer who thinks through self-righteous arrogance that he is absolutely right, has, through self-delusion, escaped from a reality too stressful for his emotional security. Emotional sins bring emotional insecurity. Emotional insecurity brings irrationality to the soul. If the problem is one based in guilt, then the delusion is that he achieved a spiritual life approximating perfection. This results in the rejected destroying his own spiritual life and substituting a false

standard of spirituality. He has put on the costume of the perfect person and he convinces himself that he is absolutely right about the current situation, as well as everything else. Once an individual starts practicing repression, denial, projection, and compensation, he is completely divorced from reality.

b. Emotional instability.

If thoughts of inferiority trouble the rejected believer, he has now achieved spiritual distinction as “a martyr of rejection.” Martyrdom is a pseudo-spiritual life. If fear, worry, or anxiety trouble the rejected believer, he has gained a sense of security, not from metabolized doctrine in the stream of consciousness or from the problem-solving devices, but from a grandiose delusion. It is very difficult to recover from this type of bitterness. Some of the trends of emotional maladjustment are:

- (1) Stubbornness.
- (2) Tantrums.
- (3) Hypersensitivity.
- (4) Sulking.
- (5) Deceitfulness.
- (6) Defiance.
- (7) Erratic behavior.
- (8) Arrogance.
- (9) Lack of affection.
- (10) Demanding much and giving little.
- (11) Ingratitude.
- (12) Limited feelings of guilt or remorse because of self-righteous arrogance, projection, denial, and repression.
- (13) Demanding instant gratification with no concern or regard for the feelings of others.
- (14) As a result of emotional instability, he has a lack of definite objectives in life, but is quick to blame others as if there were objectives in life; hence, he lives in a state of restlessness resulting from a search for the unattainable.
- (15) Emotional instability with few values in life, learning nothing from confrontation, adverse experience, or divine discipline.
- (16) The limited ability to only adjust to an environment where he or she dominates.
- (17) Often becoming a sociopathic personality, having no regard for the rights of others and being unable to either sympathize or empathize.
- (18) Projection of his insecurity by blaming others.
- (19) Rationalization of his behavior to be compatible with the status of his self-righteous arrogance.
- (20) Impulsive and instant response to his or her own feelings. Manipulation by stipulation, which means “reconciliation on my terms: if you don't do this, then I won't do that.” This is the statement of a person who has lost all perspective of reality in life. He never thinks about handling the problems of relationships with people through the use of the problem-solving devices because he never thinks about God and has no love for

Him. He is out of fellowship and does not even know it because he has entered into repression and denial.