

How Can I Ever Forgive Myself (Part 6)

Forgiving ourselves is tough. But for those who are in Christ, it is possible. It takes time and work. It is a process not a moment. So how do we do it? What are the steps?

In previous articles, we've learned:

Step #1: Own your sin.

Step #2: Own *all* your sinning.

Step #3: Accept yourself where you are.

Step #4: Mourn the loss of your ideal self.

Let's continue.

Step #5: Humble yourself.

In **Matthew 5:5**, Jesus said, "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth" (ESV). Meekness is humble submission to the control of another; in this case, the control of Jesus.

This point may seem counter-intuitive. In fact, you may declare you have already humbled yourself by heaping the loads of guilt, shame, and punishment on yourself. You believe you are an awful rotten, person. How could you get any more humble? But this is not the humility **Matthew 5:5** is talking about.

If you are in Christ, not forgiving yourself is actually a display of utter arrogance. You somehow think you're such an awful sinner that you stand out head and shoulders above the rest. You believe your sins are so great that no one else compares to you. You believe your sinning is so powerful it defies the mighty grace of God. God was powerful enough to forgive David when he committed adultery with Bathsheba and murdered Uriah; Manasseh for all of his sin, idolatry, and even human sacrifice; Peter for his denial; and Paul for his persecution and murders, but your sins are so big He can't forgive you. That is not humility; that is arrogance.

Humble yourself under the mighty hand of God's grace. Recognize the power of God, the might of His grace. Accept His forgiveness. If God can forgive you, you can forgive you.

Step #6: Bring your sins to God and embrace His promises.

In **Luke 18:13**, we see the example of the tax collector who went away justified. What did he do? He brought his sins to God. The Pharisee ignored his sins and brought his own righteousness to God, but it didn't help him. You need to be like that tax collector. Jesus died so you can live. Let Him bring you into the Holy Place before God and let His sacrifice atone for your sins (cf. **Hebrews 10:19-23**).

Having owned every sin, bring them to God. Confess them to Him. Remember the promise of **Proverbs 28:13**— "Whoever conceals his transgressions will not prosper, but he who confesses and forsakes them will obtain mercy" (ESV). I'm not talking about a legal requirement to confess every sin otherwise you'll go to hell. Rather, understand that confession helps us. It gets our sins out of the hidden recesses of our heart and lets us recognize God has taken them from us.

Remember who God is. He is not the universal tyrant looking for opportunities to zap His creations to hell for all eternity. According to **Ezekiel 18:23**, He has no pleasure in your death; He wants you to repent and live. God doesn't want to condemn you. He wants to heal you. He wants that so badly, He provided the sacrifice of His own Son to heal and forgive you. Further, He did that while you were still a sinner (**Romans 5:6-8**).

Bring those sins to God. Hand them over to Him. Talk to Him about them.

Step #7: Confess your sins to another person.

I know this is frightening. And as above, this is not some legalistic requirement in order to avoid hell. Further, this doesn't mean you have to read a list of your sins to the congregation at the end of every assembly. However, God says sharing your sins with another human being is an important part of the victory process in **James 5:16**. "Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed" (ESV).

The sickness in this passage is a spiritual one. Thus, real spiritual healing comes from finding others to confess to. Let them see you in all the wickedness you have committed. Sadly, I know there are brothers and sisters that will not help you in this process; so make sure you find a safe Christian friend and share.

A safe person is one who will share God's love with you rather than condemnation. A safe person is one who recognizes that the reason you are confessing is not to glory in your sin, but to overcome; and will see your confession not as juicy gossip, but as help even to their own walk with the Lord. If you confess to someone only to find out they weren't safe and all they bring is condemnation on you, then remember your forgiveness is not based on their judgment. God is your judge, and if you are in Christ, He has forgiven you. Don't burden yourself with trying to prove your forgiveness to another person. If they cannot accept it, that is a problem between them and God. Simply move on and try to find a truly safe person.

The reason this is so important is because we, as Christians, are God's hands in this world. It is one thing to try to maintain faith in a forgiving and loving God whom we can't see. It is completely different to see that forgiveness and love in one of God's children. It is completely different to take a chance with someone and find out that they don't hate you, they won't kick you out, they do love you, they do want to help you overcome.

By the way, this means someone may come to you with their confession. Be a safe person. Don't let Satan destroy the work of God in the person coming to you by acting haughty, disgusted, arrogant. Humble yourself; recognize you are in the same boat. Bring God's love and forgiveness to them just like you want others to do for you.

Keep working on forgiving yourself. It is a process, but it will help you have progressive victory over your sins.

--Edwin L. Crozier