

HOW DO I LIVE WITH ALL THIS GUILT AND REGRET?

Genesis 3:10

Introduction: A doctor made a risky choice to keep a heart attack patient in the local hospital instead of sending him on to a larger and better equipped hospital. The man died. Telling the man's wife her husband had died was difficult. He felt guilty, had he made the wrong decision? When parent's children get sick, what is best for their child to use over the counter drugs, home remedies, take the child to the doctor, what if the parent does the wrong thing and the child gets worse? All of us have done things we have regretted, perhaps still do. How do we live with all the guilt and regrets?

I. GUILT DEFINED

1. Guilt is an uncomfortable sensation, that of feeling bad, a tightness in the throat or chest, sometimes nausea and one's inner peace is gone. Three general categories of feelings:
 - A fear of punishment.
 - That of getting caught, someone telling.
 - **Genesis 3:10** - Adam and Eve were afraid.
 - A sense of worthlessness.
 - Disgusted with one's self, feeling like a failure, feeling stupid, low self esteem.
 - Adam and Eve hid themselves, covered themselves, then passed the responsibility of their disobedient act on to someone else.
 - A sense of rejection.
 - A feeling of being isolated, lonely, frustrated, nobody loves me, especially God. I don't even like myself.
 - **Genesis 4:13-14** - Cain felt sorry for himself.
 - Not everyone will experience every guilt feeling but the pain of GUILT can be very upsetting.
 - Are we supposed to feel these things?

II. WHY DO WE FEEL GUILTY ANYHOW?

1. **Hebrews 5:14** - The conscience determines whether we should feel guilty or not. **Romans 2:15**.
2. There was a cartoon: The husband said to his wife on his day off, "you're awful quiet this morning, and she responds, "I've decided to let your conscience be your guide on your day off." The husband takes the lawn mower, rake and hoe, then frantically rushes about doing yard work, muttering to himself, "every time I listen to my conscience, I end up ruining my day of relaxation.
3. The conscience merely registers what one puts into it: ideas, standards, shoulds, etc., It will rise up later to pass judgment.
4. To deal with our guilt, one must deal with his/her conscience.
 - To deal with our guilt, we must get our conscience in line, measure it by the Bible. Have we ignored God's precepts and standards?

- One pastor said, "I have never fished on Sunday. My father taught me it was wrong, yet the Bible says nothing about it being wrong to fish on Sunday."
- Intellectually one knows what the Bible says but our consciences have been trained in a different direction.

III. GUILTY FEELINGS SORTED OUT

1. Think about it: Are your feelings focused on yourself?
 - Is your sorrow concerned with YOUR loss or theirs? (Spill coffee on a friend, do you apologize for YOUR clumsiness and made a lot to do about yourself, OR do you offer to pay the cleaning bill for the person's messed up clothing?)
 - Dealing with guilt wrongly will dwell on one's past and focus on personal failure.
 - To deal properly with doubt one must look to see how the problem can be solves so life can go on.

2. Do you feel you are worthless?
 - A boat captain refused to jump into a life boat until all the passengers were in. He changed his mind and got into a boat. Several passengers drowned. He was found guilty in court. He could not shake the guilt, it followed him wherever he went. He felt unacceptable. He could not forgive himself. His guilt made him feel unworthy of being forgiven.
 - Each person is valuable to God. When one can accept God's love, then respect for one's self comes.
 - Guilt is inappropriate when it makes us feel that not even God can accept us.

3. Do you feel rejected? Alone? That no one loves you?
 - Disagreement with someone, then later a feeling of guilt comes, causing the belief that the relationship is over. So moodiness sets in, refusal to see or talk to that person happens.
 - The wrong kind of regret, sorrow over a disagreement can bring loneliness, frustration and depression.
 - The proper response will realize that disagreements don't mean a relationship must end. One must seek to repair the relationship.
 - Guilt in whatever state or cause will still hurt, but once understood, one can deal with it.

CONCLUSION: HOW TO GET RID OF GULT

1. Face up to your wrongdoings. Admit the wrong. God calls this "confession."
2. Seek Reconciliation. Try to fix up what you have torn down. (*Matthew 5:24*)
3. Repent, turn around. Don't just feel bad about the thing. Change your lifestyle, start over, try not to repeat the same wrong.
4. Seek out God. It may mean accepting Jesus Christ. Get to know God. Find out what His Word says. Guilt cannot be resolved by oneself. God must also be involved.

