

Getting Off The Guilt Trip Train

“There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, for the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death.”
Romans 8:1-2

“If we confess our sins, He (God) is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”
I John 1:9

GUILT.

What are you thinking about as you read and say the word guilt? Probably what I am thinking and would say.....yuk! Guilt is not something I like to dwell upon. Feeling guilty is not one of the ways that I desire to spend my day.

Guilt has a way of depressing us. Especially if we are truly guilty of something. Our Creator gave us a conscience that is very sensitive to guilt. Of course, some people sear their consciences (see I Timothy 4:2) and don't seem to feel much guilt about anything. But for those of us without seared consciences and who are sensitive to God and His way of doing things, we are troubled by guilt.

If we are not careful to deal with guilt the way God would have us deal with it, you and I can find ourselves purchasing a ticket and boarding the guilt trip train.

The guilt trip train doesn't travel to Disneyworld or any other fun place. Guilt trip trains travel to places like shame, humiliation, discouragement, depression, despair, low self-esteem to name a few unhappy destinations. When the guilt train conductor calls “All Aboard”, many people hurry to get on board, with their spiritual/emotional tails tucked between their legs. Does that sound like something you have ever done? Probably.

It is not God's will for you and me to travel through life with guilt.

There are two types of guilt: **true guilt** and **false guilt**.

True guilt means I am actually guilty of something. Real guilt means that I am at fault. I have sinned against God or people or myself in some way. True guilt is legitimate guilt. It means I have good reason for feeling guilty. And I need to deal with that guilt.

For instance, If I run a red light and the police officer pulls me over to write me a ticket, I have to take responsibility that I ran the red light. It wasn't the lights fault or

another driver's or the car's fault. It was mine. I drove through the signal. Broke the law. Endangered myself and others. I am guilty. I will have to pay the fine.

True guilt is my stuff. I have to own up to what I have done and deal with it.

God's way for dealing with true guilt is forgiveness. I John 1:9 is a conditional verse. IF you and I confess (acknowledge or agree with) our sins, THEN God will forgive us and cleanse us from all of our sins. God forgives our sins and forgets about them. He does not hold them against us. He declares us NOT GUILTY because His Son Jesus Christ paid the price for our sin and guilt when He died on the Cross in our place (Romans 5:6-11).

False guilt is when I am not guilty of something but I think and act like I am. False guilt means I am not at fault. I have not sinned against God or people or myself in some way. False guilt is illegitimate guilt. I have no valid reason for feeling guilty. And I have to deal with false guilt.

For example, your ex-spouse heaps loads of false guilt upon you through blame-shifting and finger pointing. Makes you think the divorce was all your fault. You were the bad guy. You, and you alone, are the guilty party. And you have to pay for dissolving the marriage and breaking up the family.

False guilt must be recognized for what it is, a lie, and rejected. Romans 8:1-2 states that those in Christ are no longer condemned, no longer guilty. The declaration of not guilty covers true and false guilt.

False guilt can be a terrible tormenter. People torture themselves with false guilt. Their thinking becomes distorted and often twisted when they take responsibility for things they are not responsible for.

False guilt keeps us worrying about stuff we shouldn't be worrying about; discouraged about stuff we shouldn't be discouraged about, and depressed about stuff we shouldn't be depressed about. False guilt casts a false shadow over our lives that can cripple us from living a victorious life in Christ

False guilt is not my stuff and I do not have to take responsibility for it.

True and false guilt must be dealt with in a biblical way if we are to stay off the guilt trip train.

There are three sources of guilt: **Satan, ourselves and others.**

Satan is an accuser. He is the master of guilt tripping. Revelation 12:10-11 describes the devil as an accuser of God's people.

“Now the salvation, and the power, and the kingdom of our God and the authority of His Christ have come, for the accuser of the brethren has been thrown down, who accuses them before our God day and night. And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb and because of the word of their testimony, and they did not love their life even to death.”

The devil is a liar who points his evil finger at us and declares “Guilty! Shame on you! You blew it! You messed up royally! It's over for you! God will never forgive you!

Lies, lies and more lies...guilt trip lies. Listen up my friend. Don't listen to the liar. According to our verses here, he will be thrown down once and for all. Jesus has already defeated Satan. Jesus Christ who is in you is greater than Satan who is in the world (I John 4:4). The devil is defeated, but he is a sore loser. He wants you and me to lose with him. How? Keep us feeling guilty and ashamed and discouraged and doubtful.

As a Christian, you are covered by the blood of Jesus. The Son of God's blood and your word of testimony of faith in Christ is more than enough to send the devil running.

Submit to God. Resist the devil. He will flee from you (James 4:7)

You and I can be a source of guilty feelings. How do we do it? We struggle with forgiving ourselves for our failures, mistakes and sins. If God forgives us, shouldn't we forgive ourselves? Of course we should. We also beat ourselves up over sin and over false guilt that others put on us. Jesus Christ took a beating for us so we don't have to beat up on ourselves (Isaiah 53:1-12, 61:1-4, Luke 4:18-19).

If you are feeling guilty all the time, isn't it about time you received God's forgiveness and forgave yourself...and then stopped listening to the lies of the devil and people who want you to be trapped in a guilt trip?

There are people who love to make others feel guilty. Believe me, there are plenty of “**guilt trippers**” out there who love to put others under guilt trips. They will gladly purchase us a ticket for the guilt trip train if we oblige. Parents, bosses, leaders, spouses, children, fellow workers, friends...all can try trip us up and invite us to purchase a ticket on the guilt trip train. People who are insecure and unwilling to take responsibility for themselves find some sick satisfaction by heaping guilt on others.

If there is a guilt tripper in your life, delete them from your memory banks.

Questions About Guilt

- Why am I feeling guilty about this situation? Should I be?
- Are my guilty feelings true or false? Legitimate or illegitimate?
- What is my responsibility in this situation?
- What is the responsibility of other parties involved?
- If this is false guilt, who is putting the guilt trip on me?
- What do I need to do to relieve these feelings of guilt?

How To Stop The Guilt Trip Train

- Recognize that guilt paralyzes faith and blocks forward movement in life. .
- Seek God's forgiveness for true guilt; release and forsake false guilt.
- Forgive yourself from feeling guilty about something that God has forgiven.
- Slam the door on guilt trips when they come knocking on your mind's door.
- Run away from guilt trippers who want to lay a guilt trip on you.
- Choose everyday to live free from guilt, shame and condemnation.
- Rejoice that your sins are forgiven and guilt has no power over you.

Why not get off the guilt trip train at FREEDOM station? You and the people who love you will be glad you did!

If you are feeling guilty, pray this prayer to be set free from guilt.

Heavenly Father, I come to you to give you the guilt I am feeling. I ask you to forgive me for true guilt. I have sinned and messed up. This situation (NAME IT) is my fault and I confess it to you right now. I receive your forgiveness and cleansing. My sin is covered by the blood of Jesus Christ. The Lord declares me guilt free.

I am also carrying some false guilt. This part of my situation (NAME IT) is not my fault. It is a lie of Satan. I release the false guilt to you. I forgive myself. I refuse to dwell on it anymore.

Thank you Father for loving me, forgiving me and setting me free the spirit of guilt. In Jesus' name I pray Amen.

“But now having been freed from sin and now a servant of God, you derive your benefit, resulting in sanctification, and the outcome, eternal life.” Romans 6:22

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