

FORGIVING OURSELVES

D. Bruce Barnes, Ph.D.

Do you sometimes beat yourself up over things from your past? Perhaps there are areas you've already confessed to the Lord and for which you've sought His forgiveness, but these still come back to plague you. You've been saved; you know the Lord. Yet, you find it hard to let yourself off the hook for your sins.

Sometimes, one of the hardest things to face personally is forgiving yourself. It almost seems like you need to do something more to feel better about God's forgiveness.

We need to understand more about what causes our guilt, how to apply forgiveness to ourselves as intended, and how to dismiss the self-imposed shame not related to sin. May we now find encouragement in marking out a pathway for personal peace between the Lord and us.

WHAT PREVENTS SELF-FORGIVENESS

- Recurring sins (1 John 1:6-10)
- Self-righteousness (Ephesians 2:8-9)
- Self-pity (ex., Elijah)

WHY WE SHOULD FORGIVE OURSELVES

- We'll do God's will (Matthew 5:34-4; 1 John 1:9; Romans 8:1).
- We'll thwart Satan's devices (2 Corinthians 2:10-11).
- We'll find inner peace (2 Corinthians 3:17).
- We'll become personally effective (Philippians 3:12-14).
- We'll love others more and then be loved more freely (Philippians 2:3-4).

HOW TO RESOLVE GUILT THROUGH SELF-FORGIVENESS

- Refuse Pseudo-guilt (that which does not come from God)
- Repent and Be Restored (the state in which God wants you to live)
- Remember His Propitiation (1 John 2:1-2).

Today, begin living in the joy of God's will to enjoy His forgiveness! Throw off all false guilt by recognizing it for what it is, but confess the actual sins that need His forgiveness.

We realize no one deserves the love or mercy of God, nor the forgiveness of sins. But in that Christ died for us, God having this as His will, it is honorable to the Lord that we should live in the joy and fulfillment of His forgiveness.

As much as we understand that others can know the full pardon and freedom of sin's guilt, so can you, and so should you!