



WHEN IT'S HARD TO FORGIVE YOURSELF

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(Selected Passages)

For all of us at some level, the holidays cause us to think about the relationships we have with people through family, friendship, work, neighborhood, or even happenstance. And when the Holy Spirit is in charge of our conscience, we often tend to reflect upon those relationships and situations where we have significantly hurt or damaged someone else. Such reflection, if not handled in a Biblical manner, can potentially lead **you and me** into a bottomless pit of guilt and shame that becomes debilitating. By the way, I'm specifically talking about **you and me**, because **both of us** have deeply harmed others. When this is the case, and the guilt and shame of having damaged another is crushing us because we can't seem to forgive ourselves, what are we supposed to do to find relief? Today we look into God's Word for lifechanging direction that can lift us out of the pit of despair, help us learn to forgive ourselves, and move us upward to the better place of spiritual and emotional health where Jesus can lead us forward.

WE'VE ALL DONE IT

TYPICAL WRONG WAYS OF DEALING WITH IT

1. Ignore the harm...
2. Focus on the harm...
3. Let guilt and shame...

HOW TO FORGIVE YOURSELF

1. (1 Timothy 1:13,15) Start with...
2. (2 Corinthians 7:8-9) Let guilt and shame...
3. (1 John 1:9; James 5: 16-18) Ask for...
4. (Luke 18:13) Whenever necessary...
5. (Romans 12:18) Take responsibility for...
6. (Romans 12:11) Set the course of your life to...
7. (1 Thessalonians 3:12) Make it the goal of your life to be...

Life is a joy for those whose record the Lord has cleared of guilt.
(Psalm 32:2)

FOR THOUGHT & TALK

1. Have you struggled with forgiving yourself? Read aloud **Romans 3:23**. In a Biblical message on learning to *forgive oneself* for the harm you've caused others, why must it start by pointing out that *we all* have *significantly hurt* and *seriously damaged others*?
2. When we are unable to forgive ourselves, what will oppressive shame and guilt do to us? What are the three typical *wrong* ways people in general deal with shame and guilt and how have you seen such responses in others or experienced these responses in you?
3. Read aloud **1 Timothy 1:13-15**. What does Paul's own journey with forgiveness teach us about our journey with forgiveness.
4. Discuss each of the seven aspects of forgiving yourself by first stating the concept, then sharing answers to this question: *How can this step help us forgive ourselves?*
5. *Life is a joy for those whose record the Lord has cleared of guilt* (Psalm 32:2). How grateful to God are you for the forgiveness that the Lord Jesus brings to all who receive Him as their God and Savior?