



Day nine

For the next 40 days we are offering us all a challenge to consider 40 things that are sucking the life out of us. The challenge is to examine these and through confronting God's word, his Spirit, and his community of faith as we seek to be filled with his life and his love again. At the conclusion of each challenge there will be an opportunity to engage about this with another person and/or the larger community.

Today the thing we are asking us to explore giving up is:

guilt.

Confronting the text

"They heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden at the time of the evening breeze, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden," (Gen. 3:8).

So I find it to be a law that when I want to do what is good, evil lies close at hand. For I delight in the law of God in my inmost self, but I see in my members another law at war with the law of my mind, making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members. Wretched man that I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!

So then, with my mind I am a slave to the law of God, but with my flesh I am a slave to the law of sin.

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. For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do: by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and to deal with sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, so that the just requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to

the flesh but according to the Spirit, (Romans 7:21-8-4).

Confronting my self with God

Guilt isn't all bad. Guilt is like an instrument light on the dashboard of your car: it alerts you to the fact that something is wrong.

Continued guilt is however not good. When we are continually guilty there is something between us and . . . God . . . and others . . . That is why what Christ did for us is so important. Through the cross we are able to come out of hiding "amongst the trees" which is our tendency since Adam.

Of course, it would be better to not have to go into the trees in the first place.

Autobiography In Five Short Chapters

- by Portia Nelson

Chapter I

I walk down the street.
There is a deep hole in the sidewalk.
I fall in.
I am lost... I am hopeless.
It isn't my fault.
It takes forever to find a way out.

Chapter II

I walk down the same street.
There is a deep hole in the sidewalk.
I pretend I don't see it.
I fall in again.
I can't believe I am in this same place.
But it isn't my fault.
It still takes a long time to get out.

Chapter III

I walk down the same street.
There is a deep hole in the sidewalk.
I see it there.
I still fall in... it's a habit... but,
my eyes are open.
I know where I am.
It is my fault.
I get out immediately.

Chapter IV

I walk down the same street.
There is a deep hole in the sidewalk.
I walk around it.

Chapter V

I walk down another street.

Listening to God's people

Where do I feel the most guilt?

To whom can I talk to sort this out?