

Trust God's Word, Not Popular Ideas!

A third reason may be based upon misinformation from teaching that is not based upon the principles of the Bible. A person may hear this phrase, "...you have to forgive yourself" and think it is a spiritual principle of God. Those who use this idea are often sincere in their desire to help the person deal with feelings of unforgiveness. However, the person is led to conclude that this is something they must attempt to do. If this is you, go back to the Bible and believe what it says about God's forgiveness through Christ.

Trust God, Not Yourself

It is often the case that those who use the phrase, "... I must forgive myself" are sincerely trying to find God's forgiveness, but finding it hard to do so. They struggle to find a way, within themselves, to be forgiven. Usually, this only leads to confusion and frustration. What they fail to understand is that God's forgiveness is absolutely all that is needed. All that God has asked them to do is to trust in what He did for them through the atoning death of His Son, Jesus Christ. If you will trust God to forgive you, then you will be free to receive and experience God's forgiveness in your own life.

Receive God's Forgiveness!

Not too long ago, I had the opportunity to share this truth on two separate occasions with individuals who brought up the idea of needing to forgive themselves. It was so exciting to see the truth of God's forgiveness set them free from the burden of self-forgiveness that hung over them like a

cloud. The wonder and beauty of God's forgiveness through Christ's atoning death can set you free. Have you believed a lie? Have you held yourself hostage to a condition of self-forgiveness that you couldn't obtain? Have you stepped over the blood-stained body of Jesus Christ and thought that you were worthy enough to forgive yourself? My friend, God wants to set you free. Receive His forgiveness for your sin(s) and trust Him to do just what He promised.

CAN I FORGIVE MYSELF?

KNOW THE TRUTH



"...AND THE TRUTH WILL SET YOU FREE."

Pastor Lynn Kern

A Popular Problem:

One of the most common phrases used by many Christians today goes something like this: "I just can't forgive myself." or "I know God has forgiven me, but I haven't forgiven myself." Books and support programs have taken up the idea, making it a common view among many. There is no doubt that the idea expresses a real and sincere need in many people as they attempt to experience forgiveness from God.

Are You Free?

This brief study is designed to help you understand God's wonderful offer of forgiveness through Christ's atoning death. Jesus said, "You shall know the truth, and the truth shall set you free." It is a spiritual fact that if people believe wrong, they will come to wrong conclusions about themselves and God. It is important that God's truth about forgiveness be established in your life.

Are You Holding Yourself Hostage?

God wants to set you free from the lingering guilt and shame of past sin due to your wrong ideas about forgiveness. You may be holding yourself hostage by believing that you must forgive yourself as a condition for receiving God's forgiveness. There is nothing in the Bible that teaches that you must forgive yourself; nor, that there is a basis on which you can forgive yourself.

On What Basis Are You Forgiven?

God's word teaches that you are forgiven because of what God did in atoning (paying the debt) for sin through the death of Jesus Christ. Jesus died for you, paid the debt - the punishment for your sin. God declared you forgiven on that basis and your faith

(trust) in that promise enables you to receive His forgiveness. *"The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom you had put to death by hanging Him on a cross. He is the one whom God exalted to His right hand as a Prince and a Savior, to grant repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins."* (Acts 5:30,31) *"In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace."* (Eph. 1:7) *"And when you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions, having canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us and which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross."* (Col. 2:13,14) *"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."* (1 John 1:9)

Can You Forgive Yourself?

Can you forgive yourself? On what basis? Have you done anything that makes you worthy of forgiving yourself? Are you putting yourself in a higher position than God and giving yourself the authority to forgive yourself? You may not be consciously thinking that way, but when you bypass God's promise of forgiveness and demand your own, you are competing with God's authority. Besides, that's why so many people struggle to forgive themselves, they discover their self-forgiveness to be inadequate and unreliable.

Jesus' Atoning Death Was Enough!

Why then, do so many people seem to have the need to forgive themselves? I believe there is a number of reasons. First, it may be because they are unable to trust that God's offer of forgiveness through Christ's atoning death was enough to pay for their sin(s). Their doubt leads them to attempt to forgive themselves. If this is you, then you need to take another look at the wonderful, priceless, and loving sacrifice God gave for you through His Son's death on the cross. *"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life."* (John 3:16) By faith, receive God's forgiveness as the only basis of being forgiven.

Choose Faith, Not Feelings!

A second reason may be the feelings of guilt and shame that continue after they have asked God's forgiveness. The person believes that God forgives, but their lack of "feeling" forgiven by God leads them to conclude that more is needed. They are led to believe that the reason they feel unforgiven lies with themselves. They must then, find a way to forgive themselves. If this is you, realize that feelings do not determine whether you have been forgiven or not. Feelings of being forgiven by God will follow your willful choice to receive God's forgiveness by faith. Receive God's forgiveness on the basis of His promise. *"The one who says he is in the light and yet hates his brother is in the darkness until now."* (1 John 1:9) Then, receive God's forgiveness and stop trying to forgive yourself.