

What does the Bible teach on letting go of past and present hurts and heartaches?

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One of the difficulties the Christian is faced with is when he/she cannot forgive their own sins. We pray for forgiveness, often pouring out our disgust with ourselves, and once the deed is exposed and forgiveness has been executed by God, through Christ, we often resume personal punishment and torment of own souls which God has said is “clean through My Son’s Blood”.

These sins may range from shop lifting, to lying, to one of the immoral family members of fornication, or even murder. Sometimes the stain of that sin is so etched on the memory that continued guilt can ruin a job, break up a family or drive a person mad.

Guilt operates because God has placed within man a conscience. The Apostle Paul said, it is built-in and it “bears witness with our thoughts, alternating and either accusing or excusing” our actions. Rom 2:14-15

What a great concept! When we are born, our little gray cells are programmed to sort out right and wrong. It does not matter where on earth and to whichever DNA gene pool we swim from. When that conscience kicks in because we have violated some human or Godly set of “rules of play”, our memory bank sorts through our failure, and like a computer virus, it re-surfaces and torments our emotions. And if we do not have a forgiving covenant relationship with Christ, it can grind away on us until we feel as guilty as we did when we committed the original deed. Thus, it runs in an endless cycle of forgiveness, despair, comfort, and madness.

American Christians seem particularly creative in resurrecting forgiven sins. No matter how big or small the sins, we concur with Paul that we are “wretched” and beg rescue from our “body of death”. Rom 7:24. There may be several reasons for this creative flaw.

First, it could be that Christianity comes too cheap to many who claim His name? Stress might bring us to the point of a simple declaration before others that we “need Him”, then when the crowd has dissipated, and the guilt trip is calmed, we go back to business as usual. We become “Luke warm” neither hot nor cold? Rev 3:16

Perhaps we are so self-sufficient, as a nation, we cannot let loose of past sins and when we repeat similar ones, we conclude that since WE cannot get a grip on sin in general and forgive ourselves, certainly God who is much smarter and more powerful than we are must not forgive us either? We cannot, therefore God will not.

But God DOES forgive our sins. How do we know that? Because Paul said so -- “therefore if we have been buried and resurrected with Him in baptism – our “old body of sin (or body of death) will be done away with, that we no longer SHOULD be slaves to sin”. Rom 6:6

Jesus removes our sins and the guilt that accompanies them when we submit to Him and are baptized. But if that original forgiveness came so cheap, without conviction and understanding of how God’s new covenant works in our lives, then it does not have the proper roots and can be ripped up and blown about by “every wind of doctrine” that comes along”. Eph 4:14

Paul gave us such great advice on this subject in Phil 3

8 More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish in order that I may gain Christ,

9 and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith,

10 that I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death;

11 in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.

12 Not that I have already obtained it, or have already become perfect, but I press on in order that I may lay hold of that for which also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus.

13 Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet; but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead,

14 I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.