

Guilt: Losing Shame, Finding Grace

We've reached the close of our series on emotions that impact our day-to-day walk. We learned to consider fear when it says, "something is about to hurt me, and I'm losing control"; anger when it says, "a standard is broken and I'm going to do something about it"; and sadness when it says, "everything is lost and I'm lost!" Hopefully, we learned how each emotion has its time and place and how to navigate each one. What's the last emotion? Guilt. As with the others we've discussed, there's a time and place for guilt, and a right and wrong way to react.

So, let's dig in. Let's consider some negative and positive examples of guilt and ask, "What is guilt saying to me?" But as you'll see towards the end, there's something about guilt that stands out, and my prayer is that it leaves you with hope and peace.

Negative Examples:

- Adam & Eve (**Gen. 3**)
 - Hiding and blame-shifting
- Saul (**1 Sam. 15**)
 - Excuse making, while worrying about reputation, appearance, and consequences.
- Judas (**Matt. 27:3-5**)
 - Willing to restore money, but not relationship.

Positive Examples:

- David (**2 Sam. 12**)
 - I have sinned against the Lord.
- Corinth (**2 Cor. 7:2-10**)
 - Repentance with no regret.
- Peter (**John 21**)
 - Restored in every way.

What's Guilt Saying To Us?

- If fear says, "something threatens me", and anger says, "something is wrong," and sadness says, "Something valuable to me is gone" or "I'm experiencing a loss," then guilt says, "I am responsible for wrongdoing."
- This could be a violation of yourself, another person, or God. This is unique because it looks inward and is directed at yourself. It's not something else (looking outward) like fear, anger, or sadness, which can look outward and backward. It's looking in the mirror. It's why it can feel heavier than all other emotions.
- **MY SOUL IS OUT OF ALIGNMENT, AND SOMETHING NEEDS TO BE MADE RIGHT!**
- Guilt isn't wrong. Healthy guilt teaches us to stop and pay attention. It demands correction, which leads us to repentance and reconciliation. It leads to forgiveness. Unhealthy guilt says: "I am beyond repair." Instead of moving towards God, we run from Him. It

overwhelms, and oddly enough, can lead to selfishness. It's been said that humility isn't thinking less of yourself; it's thinking of yourself less.

Jesus:

- He has no guilt. He took the pain, guilt, and consequences to the cross.
- Your sin, though sin, does not define you before God. Your faith in Jesus will. This big sin you may be struggling with won't define you in God's eyes.
 - Did Paul ever struggle to see the families he persecuted?
 - What about the woman in Luke 7? She's appreciating what Jesus has done for her.
- Jesus didn't promise to erase the memory of your sin; rather, the consequences because of His love and grace towards you.
- Remember: Adam's sin resulted in condemnation. Jesus' faithfulness results in grace.