

The Guilty Conscience and the Faithful Heart

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Introduction: God's ways must be taught, learned and practiced.

A. The spiritual promises of God primarily impact the mind or the heart. Jesus can heal our souls! **(Mt 9:12-13)**

1. In physical healing we can see the results with our eyes and feel it in our bodies.
2. In spiritual healing there is the response of God in His mind and then our recognizing that response in our minds.
3. It is possible and even common to have one stand forgiven before God but still struggle in the mind to actually receive that forgiveness.

B. God wants each of us to have absolute confidence in His promises.

(1 Jn 2:1-2; Eph 2:1, 5-8)

1. How can I find the assurance that leads to a joyful and active service to God?
2. How can I learn to live a life free from the crippling burdens of guilt and doubt?

I. What does it mean to have my guilt removed?

A. What is guilt? **(Ezk 18:20)**

1. Guilt involves a violation of law that carries a penalty. Even the knowledge of that penalty can produce a painful burden that is carried in the mind.
2. There is great power in knowing you are forgiven before God.
3. This is why knowing the character of God and His conditional promises must be diligently pursued by each of us! **(1 Jn 4:16-19)**
4. Men want to make you feel guilty for that which is right! **(Isa 50:5-7)**

B. What is the pain of guilt like?

1. It is like a cutting deep in our heart that cries out for healing. **(Acts 2:37)**
2. It is like broken bones that are deeply sensitive and in need of healing. **(Ps 51:8)**
3. It is like an inescapable burden that wears you down that you cannot cast aside. **(Ps 32:3-4)**
4. The common idea is a pain that keeps one from a joyful life.

C. Both God and Satan have ways to remove guilt.

1. God's way always involves repentance. **(Acts 2:38; 8:22)**
2. God's way always involves honesty, an open heart to reality of seeing ourselves and God's promises. It is real! **(Jn 3:21)**
3. Satan seeks to destroy a precious part of our being that is our conscience. **(Jer 6:14-15; 8:12-13; 1 Tim 4:2)**
4. Satan's way is a lie. It only reveals guilt to us when it is too late! **(Jn 3:19-20)**

II. How can I align my thoughts with the promises of God?

A. This is the essence of Christian growth! **(2 Cor 10:4-5)**

1. We must daily work on our thoughts. If we do nothing then Satan will provide "answers."
2. I can know where I stand with God by His revealed words. **(Rom 8:14-18)**

- B. Why *do I still feel guilty* even when I have met the conditions of God's promises?
1. Some guilt is *a phantom guilt*, based on pure emotion and imagination.
 2. This is *a matter of faith!* Do we believe that *God will do what He said?*
(Jer 31:34; 1 Jn 1:7-9)
 3. Here is where I need to take God's promises and *read them over and over!*
God is not like a man nor *does He hold grudges like a man.* (Num 23:19)
 4. Please read and meditate often about the character of God. There is a real peace and comfort in *truly knowing God!* (Rom 15:4; 5:6-8)
 5. It is good to pray about your lack of faith! Our God knows this too and understands!
(Mk 9:23-24)
- C. Consider some *common misunderstandings* men have about God's ways.
1. "You can only repent sincerely of a sin once."
 2. "If you genuinely repent then you will not go out and do the same thing again."
(Acts 8:9-10, 13, 19-20, 22-23)
 3. "I have committed the unpardonable sin." (Mt 12:31; Heb 6:4-6; 10:26-30)
 4. "If brethren will not accept me then God must not as well."

III. How can we better encourage and uphold each other?

- A. We need to *draw closer to those* who have been forgiven. (Heb 12:12-13)
1. Imagine the guilt the one publicly marked felt! (1 Cor 5:1-4)
 2. It was this very guilt that drove him to repentance. (2 Cor 2:5-8)
 3. Now comes the time to "reaffirm *your* love to him."
 4. Here is *where Satan wins battles* because of our negligence! (2 Cor 2:10-11)
- B. Each of us must seek out the association of brethren serious about their faith.
1. This lack of association will *help sin to have an opportunity.* (1 Cor 15:33)
 2. Often one in guilt *stops attending or runs out after services!* Our services and our associations are directed towards understanding and healing.
 3. Experienced Christians understanding because *they have also been where you are!*
(2 Cor 1:3-4)
- C. There are some Christians *who will not encourage you.*
1. Do not let what a few do speak for the others and *especially not for God!* (Rom 3:4)
 2. I have seen some Christians:
 - a. Look indifferently upon one's response.
 - b. Openly say: "They will not make it!"
 - c. Refuse to have much to do with you because of what you did.
 - d. Continue to bring your sin up.
 3. Let us also show mercy too and not try to *read minds and be sensitive.*

Conclusion: Are you willing to receive God's forgiveness?