

Guilt, Oppression or Motivation?

Psalm 51:5-17

Topic: Guilt

Aim: To show that guilt can be real and that it needs to be dealt with properly.

1. In 2 Samuel 12: 13, David confesses: "I have sinned"
2. That is the same as saying "I am guilty." How do we feel about such an open admission of guilt?
3. Society as a whole is fearful of guilt.
4. This lesson seeks to ask and answer the question: "Guilt: Oppression or Motivation?"

I. What is this thing called guilt?

A. Modern people helpers see guilt as oppressive.

1. They see it as a contributing factor to emotional maladjustment.
2. Their solution: get rid of the guilt
3. But since many are anti-religion or atheistic, where do they turn? How do they propose that we "get rid of the guilt?"
4. Their solution is often simply the lowering of the standards, re-educate the conscience so it sends no more guilt messages. But that is no solution!

B. Guilt is a message of disapproval from the conscience.

1. It is a message from our sense of right and wrong that says: "You messed up!"
2. The feelings resulting from that message can be intense.
 - a. Psalm 51.
 - b. Luke 22:60-61.

C. I believe that guilt, contrary to popular belief, can be a positive thing, even a motivator, if handled properly.

1. It is a distress signal that all is not well between me and others, self or God.
2. Personal and societal disapproval is in fact necessary if change is to occur.
3. The emotion of guilt shows there is life in the heart. A hardened heart feels no pain. Witness the violent crimes committed by so many today wherein no remorse is shown. Why? No guilt! Ephesians 4: 17-19.

II. But there is the reality that many are wracked with guilt. Some have spoken of a "guilt complex". I have concluded there are two kinds of guilt.

A False guilt or subjective guilt. One writer calls it "undeserved guilt".

1. Behind it may be a wrong committed, but it is accompanied with a self condemning judgment that destroys self esteem.
2. This is destructive, oppressive because it bogs down in self inflicted misery and judgment.
3. Some say this is from Satan and is one of his ways of destroying the souls of men.

B. Real guilt or objective guilt.

1. This is guilt that is real and properly assessed.
2. It does not descend into damaging self judgment.
3. It examines the facts and does what is appropriate to alleviate the guilt!
4. It seeks repentance (a change of life) and forgiveness, Acts 2: 36-38, David, Psalm 51.
5. This guilt is from God and is a motivator to change and right behavior.

C. How do I know the difference?

1. The key is the mind and volition.
2. All emotions have a rational base.
3. The question is "Is my guilt rational?"
4. May need the help of an objective, mature, spiritual outsider just here.
5. If it is rational do what needs to be done!
6. If it is irrational need to let it go!

III In both cases we need to remember:

A. The mercy and grace of God.

1. It allows the blood to cleanse all sin, no matter how great the sin.
2. Story of the soldier who made a vow with his buddies to kill all the Japanese they could. They mercilessly killed several Japanese who were trying to surrender. The guilt at first was real. But then as time passed, he began to think no one, especially God, could forgive him. He lost sight of the power of real forgiveness.

B. When God's and others forgiveness is extended, we must forgive ourselves.

1. Each time we think of the wrong committed, which we will because Satan will remind us, we must remind ourselves that God has forgiven, because we have done what was needed, and He keeps His promises.
2. This, I believe, is the real key to false guilt.

1. God, through the blood of Christ will clear our consciences, just as He did those of David, Peter, and those on Pentecost and millions since then.
2. There IS power in the blood.

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