

How to enjoy guilt-free living

1. Confession and repentance

1 John 1:8 If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

⁹ If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

2. Trust Jesus and His promise of forgiveness

2 Corinthians 5:21 He made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

Hebrews 10:16 "This is the covenant that I will make with them After those days, says the Lord: I will put My laws upon their heart, And upon their mind I will write them," *He then says,*

¹⁷ "And their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more."

Romans 8:1 There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

3. Restitution and reconciliation

Luke 19:8 And Zaccheus stopped and said to the Lord, "Behold, Lord, half of my possessions I will give to the poor, and if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I will give back four times as much."

Matthew 5:23 "If therefore you are presenting your offering at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you,

²⁴ leave your offering there before the altar, and go your way; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and present your offering.

4. Forgive others

Matthew 6:14 "For if you forgive men for their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.

¹⁵ "But if you do not forgive men, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions.

5. Confess sin to others

James 5:16 ...confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, so that you may be healed. The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much.

The importance of forgiveness

Matthew 6:14 "For if you forgive men for their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.

¹⁵ "But if you do not forgive men, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions.

Matthew 18:34 "And his lord, moved with anger, handed him over to the torturers until he should repay all that was owed him.

³⁵ "So shall My heavenly Father also do to you, if each of you does not forgive his brother from your heart."

The definition of forgiveness -

releasing the perpetrator and the debt to God and His authorities.

Note: don't confuse...

a. interpersonal and institutional forgiveness

Matthew 18:15 "And if your brother sins, go and reprove him in private; if he listens to you, you have won your brother.

¹⁶ "But if he does not listen *to you*, take one or two more with you, so that by the mouth of two or three witnesses every fact may be confirmed.

¹⁷ "And if he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax-gatherer.

¹⁸ "Truly I say to you, whatever you shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

¹⁹ "Again I say to you, that if two of you agree on earth about anything that they may ask, it shall be done for them by My Father who is in heaven.

²⁰ "For where two or three have gathered together in My name, there I am in their midst."

²¹ Then Peter came and said to Him, "Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him? Up to seven times?"

²² Jesus said to him, "I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven.

²³ "For this reason the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a certain king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves.

²⁴ "And when he had begun to settle *them*, there was brought to him one who owed him ten thousand talents.

²⁵ "But since he did not have *the means* to repay, his lord commanded him to be sold, along with his wife and children and all that he had, and repayment to be made.

²⁶ "The slave therefore falling down, prostrated himself before him, saying, 'Have patience with me, and I will repay you everything.'

²⁷ "And the lord of that slave felt compassion and released him and forgave him the debt.

²⁸ "But that slave went out and found one of his fellow slaves who owed him a hundred denarii; and he seized him and *began* to choke *him*, saying, 'Pay back what you owe.'

²⁹ "So his fellow slave fell down and *began* to entreat him, saying, 'Have patience with me and I will repay you.'

³⁰ "He was unwilling however, but went and threw him in prison until he should pay back what was owed.

³¹ "So when his fellow slaves saw what had happened, they were deeply grieved and came and reported to their lord all that had happened.

³² "Then summoning him, his lord said to him, 'You wicked slave, I forgave you all that debt because you entreated me.

³³ 'Should you not also have had mercy on your fellow slave, even as I had mercy on you?'

³⁴ "And his lord, moved with anger, handed him over to the torturers until he should repay all that was owed him.

³⁵ "So shall My heavenly Father also do to you, if each of you does not forgive his brother from your heart."

Romans 12:17 Never pay back evil for evil to anyone. Respect what is right in the sight of all men.

¹⁸ If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men.

¹⁹ Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord.

²⁰ "But if your enemy is hungry, feed him, and if he is thirsty, give him a drink; for in so doing you will heap burning coals upon his head."

²¹ Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

13:1 Let every person be in subjection to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God.

² Therefore he who resists authority has opposed the ordinance of God; and they who have opposed will receive condemnation upon themselves.

³ For rulers are not a cause of fear for good behavior, but for evil. Do you want to have no fear of authority? Do what is good, and you will have praise from the same;

⁴ for it is a minister of God to you for good. But if you do what is evil, be afraid; for it does not bear the sword for nothing; for it is a minister of God, an avenger who brings wrath upon the one who practices evil.

b. forgiveness and forgetfulness

c. forgiveness and trust

d. forgiveness and righteous anger

e. forgiveness and grief

How to forgive

1. Pray

Matthew 6:9 "Pray, then, in this way: 'Our Father who art in heaven, Hallowed be Thy name.

¹⁰ 'Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, On earth as it is in heaven.

¹¹ 'Give us this day our daily bread.

¹² 'And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.

Acts 7:59 And they went on stoning Stephen as he called upon *the Lord* and said, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!"

⁶⁰ And falling on his knees, he cried out with a loud voice, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them!" And having said this, he fell asleep.

2. Think about...

a. Jesus' example

Colossians 3:13 bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you.

2 Corinthians 5:21 He made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

b. my own need of forgiveness

Matthew 18:23-35 (quoted earlier)

c. the blessing of forgiving and the cost of unforgiveness

Mark 11:25 "And whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone; so that your Father also who is in heaven may forgive you your transgressions.

Matthew 6:14 "For if you forgive men for their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.

¹⁵ "But if you do not forgive men, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions.

Matthew 18:34 "And his lord, moved with anger, handed him over to the torturers until he should repay all that was owed him.

³⁵ "So shall My heavenly Father also do to you, if each of you does not forgive his brother from your heart."

3. Forgive (release the perpetrator and the debt to God and His authorities)

Matthew 18:15-35 and Romans 12:17-13:4 (quoted earlier)

Note: the key is trusting God

1 Peter 2:21 For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps,

²² who committed no sin, nor was any deceit found in His mouth;

²³ and while being reviled, He did not revile in return; while suffering, He uttered no threats, but kept entrusting *Himself* to Him who judges righteously;

Luke 17:1 And He said to His disciples, "It is inevitable that stumbling blocks should come, but woe to him through whom they come!

² "It would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck and he were thrown into the sea, than that he should cause one of these little ones to stumble.

³ "Be on your guard! If your brother sins, rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him.

⁴ "And if he sins against you seven times a day, and returns to you seven times, saying, 'I repent,' forgive him."

⁵ And the apostles said to the Lord, "Increase our faith!"

⁶ And the Lord said, "If you had faith like a mustard seed, you would say to this mulberry tree, 'Be uprooted and be planted in the sea'; and it would obey you.

Genesis 45:1 Then Joseph could not control himself before all those who stood by him, and he cried, "Have everyone go out from me." So there was no man with him when Joseph made himself known to his brothers.

² And he wept so loudly that the Egyptians heard *it*, and the household of Pharaoh heard *of it*...

...⁷ "And God sent me before you to preserve for you a remnant in the earth, and to keep you alive by a great deliverance.

⁸ "Now, therefore, it was not you who sent me here, but God;...

...¹⁵ And he kissed all his brothers and wept on them, and afterward his brothers talked with him.

4. Act on forgiveness (minister to the perpetrator)

Genesis 45:18 and take your father and your households and come to me, and I will give you the best of the land of Egypt and you shall eat the fat of the land.'

¹⁹ "Now you are ordered, 'Do this: take wagons from the land of Egypt for your little ones and for your wives, and bring your father and come.

²⁰ 'And do not concern yourselves with your goods, for the best of all the land of Egypt is yours.'"

Ephesians 4:31 Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice.

³² And be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.

5:1 Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children;

² and walk in love, just as Christ also loved you, and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma.

Exodus 23:4 "If you meet your enemy's ox or his donkey wandering away, you shall surely return it to him.

Luke 6:27 "But I say to you who hear, love your enemies, do good to those who hate you,

²⁸ bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you.

Romans 12:17-21 (quoted above)

Matthew 18:15-17 (quoted above)

5. Reconcile with the perpetrator if appropriate

Romans 12:17 Never pay back evil for evil to anyone. Respect what is right in the sight of all men.

¹⁸ If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men.

¹⁹ Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath *of God*,

All Scripture: NASV