



# Guilt

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# Guilt - A Thought or feeling (cognition or emotion)

- Thoughts (Cognitions) - self-talk, beliefs, expectations (shoulds)
- Feelings (Emotions) - remorse, regret, shame

True or false guilt  
(healthy or not) -

Belief that I have done  
something wrong, or may do  
something wrong

# True guilt may come as a result of conviction from the Holy Spirit

- Holy Spirit present in the life of believer and follower of Jesus Christ
- God has written his law on our heart - “Natural Law”
- In true guilt you can name your sin - know without doubt
- True guilt results in accepting God’s price for our sin and receiving His Grace
- Repentance results in gratitude to God and relief of our burden, Thanksgiving, Worship, Praise

# False guilt is characterized by speculation

- “I might have . . .”
  - disappointed God or others
  - said the wrong thing
  - A person may think I’ve let them down (mind reading)
- Often there is no certainty

# Conviction v condemnation

When God, through the Holy Spirit, convicts us we KNOW our wrong or offense

- We can often tie it back to having disobeyed God's law or commands
- When we experience conviction, we know what we must do -
  - Repent, stop doing what we did, make a plan for change
  - In conviction we have the assurance that God is there to help us change

Romans 8:1 NIV

Therefore, there is  
now no condemnation  
for those who are in  
Christ Jesus

# Condemnation is guilt without certainty, sometimes involves impossible expectations

- I should have known
- I should have saved them (survivor guilt)
- I should have worked harder
- I should be able to fix . . .
- May involve Spiritual Warfare



# Ongoing feelings of guilt result from:

- Bad theology (information) or Not accepting Grace
- Self-condemnation as a habit or misbelief that it is spiritual to feel guilty
- True guilt but refusing to repent or make amends
- A psychological disorder

Psychological disorders:

## OCD - obsessive compulsive disorder

- Compulsions and / or obsessions
  - Intrusive thoughts
  - Rumination, obsession
  - Repetitive or ritualistic behaviors which have no real purpose

# Generalized anxiety disorder

- Characterized by persistence over time, at least 6 months
- Is associated with multiple symptoms
  - Restlessness, agitation
  - Fatigue
  - Difficulty concentrating
  - Irritability
  - Sleep disturbance
  - Symptoms interfere with work, social functioning, fulfilling responsibilities
  - Can result from medical conditions

# Depression

- Characterized by persistence and severity
- Is associated with multiple symptoms
  - Includes cognitions of hopelessness, helplessness, self-depreciation
  - Diminished interest in activities that used to bring pleasure or joy (anhedonia)
  - Sadness, painful mood (dysphoria)
  - Weight gain or loss, change in appetite
  - Sleep disturbance
  - Fatigue, lack of energy or motivation
  - Difficulty concentrating
  - Significant impairment in functioning

# Spiritual warfare

- 1 Peter 5:8 Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.
- The Devil is known as: the adversary, accuser, deceiver, the evil one, father of lies, liar, tempter
- James 4:7 So humble (submit) yourselves before God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.
- Tools for Spiritual Warfare: The Word of God, Prayer, believers together

Failing to feel any guilt is a serious disorder (psychopathy)

Antisocial Personality Disorder,  
Narcissistic Personality  
Disorder, etc.

## Applications For Yourself:

- It is common for those who labor for Christ to feel they are not doing enough - GUILT
- Luke 10:2 He told them, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.
- Gal. 6:9 And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up.
- 1 Corinthians 3:6-9 (NIV) 6 I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God has been making it grow. 7 So neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow. 8 The one who plants and the one who waters have one purpose, and they will each be rewarded according to their own labor. 9 For we are co-workers in God's service; you are God's field, God's building.
- Self-care

## Applications For Those You Minister to:

- It is not your job to “fix” people who feel guilt
- You are but one in the life of those you minister to
- You have the power of encouragement, prayer, and possibly teaching
- Care-givers are not pastors or mental health professionals
  - Be clear about your role
  - It is often tempting to stretch beyond our boundaries
- Conferring and referral is caring