

The Guilty Conscience

By: Teri Miller Barker



“He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her,” are the words Jesus said to the scribes and Pharisees that brought Him an adulterous woman caught in the very act. At that time, the sin was punishable by stoning the perpetrator to death. Jesus ignored the accusers and began writing on the ground as if He didn’t even hear them. When they pressed the issue again, He made the statement that convicted their conscience about the sins that they had committed themselves. One by one, each of the accusers went out until there was no one left but Jesus and the adulterous woman. Once they were alone, Jesus told her that he did not condemn her and commanded her to “go and sin no more.” Although that scene took place over 2,000 years ago, the nature of mankind is still very much the same. People sin and hypocritical people have the audacity to judge them for it. Romans 3:23 reminds us that we “all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.” I had to share this message because I recently listened as a young woman explained how she could not forgive herself for some things she did in her past. Her guilt kept her up at night, and when she did fall asleep, her dreams forced her to relive the situation over and over. And since a lot of human experiences are universal, I felt that her concern would make a great subject for my commentary on guilt.

Guilt is a powerful, condemning emotion that robs us of our joy and our ability to feel free. Sometimes, other people will condemn us, and sometimes we throw the stones at ourselves. But as Christians, we have the authority, through Jesus Christ, to resist those thoughts and feelings of guilt. God will forgive you. Now it is time for YOU to forgive you. Stop beating up on yourself, and stop letting the devil keep you oppressed with transgressions that God has removed from you as far as the east is from the west (Psalm 103:12). But, in order to resist, you must be girded in the spiritual armor that is the Word of God. No one can learn it for you. No one else can gird you and fight your battles. Only you can make yourself stand firm on what God has said. You have to study it and know it, so that when battles arise, you have the spiritual wherewithal to fight back and resist the thoughts that are stealing your peace of mind. Stop punishing yourself; Christ has redeemed you.

A huge part of the fundamental belief in Christian doctrine is that Jesus died on the cross for our sins and our salvation. Don’t allow yourself to keep paying for something that Jesus paid the ultimate price for when he shed His Blood and died a painful, publicly displayed death by crucifixion. Forgive yourself of past sins and stop allowing the persistent thoughts to plague and harass you spiritually. God is so gracious, merciful, and forgiving beyond what we are even able to grasp in our limited human understanding.

If your guilt has a relentless grip on you, ask God for forgiveness. Believe in your heart that He has done it. Stop casting stones at yourself, then “go and sin no more.”