

Ben Nelson is my associate here at KJM. God is working a great work in him and I wanted him to share this with you.
Bro. Kim



FEELING GUILTY?

by Ben Nelson

Over the last few months I have been noticing an increasing amount of preaching and teaching over "Christian" radio and TV stations having to do with the feeling of guilt. All this attention to the subject whet my curiosity so I decided to see what the Bible has to say about it. My findings did not match up with the current wave of "ultra positive/anti negative" philosophy that is so pervasive in these last days. So I set out to answer a couple of simple questions.

1. What does the Bible say about guilt or guilt feelings?

2. How does it say we should deal with each?

Here is what I found.

First of all, every reference to any form of the word guilt in the Bible refers to the fact of guilt or innocence. Guilt in every case in the Bible refers only to either the fact that someone had committed sin and was guilty, or the fact that someone had not committed sin and was guiltless. There is no reference in the Bible to "guilty feelings".

So my first observation is that guilt is not a feeling, it is a fact. A fact that we all face as noted in the following verses.

Romans 3:19

"Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God."

James 2:10

"For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all".

Guilt is even a fact when there are no feelings or even knowledge of sin. The fact of your ignorance does not make you guiltless. You are guilty in the eyes of God, whether you know that you have sinned or not.

Leviticus 5:17

"And if a soul sin, and commit any of these things which are forbidden to be done by the commandments of the LORD; though he wist it not, yet is he

guilty, and shall bear his iniquity".

Do you remember Saul of Tarsus? Though he thought he was doing God a service by persecuting the church, Jesus stopped him in his tracks to tell him to repent. As far as he was concerned he was doing the will of God, but later, in I Timothy 1:15 he proclaims himself the very chief of sinners. Though he did not know it, he was **in fact** guilty. He didn't have any guilty feelings until he was confronted with his sin and the holiness of Jesus.

I did find some reference to what might be interpreted as guilty feelings in Paul's second letter to the Corinthians as follows.

II Cor 7:8-11

"For though I made you sorry with a letter, I do not repent, though I did repent: for I perceive that the same epistle hath made you sorry, though it were but for a season. Now I rejoice, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye sorrowed to repentance: for ye were made sorry after a godly manner, that ye might receive damage by us in nothing."

For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death."

For behold this selfsame thing, that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you, yea, what clearing of yourselves, yea, what indignation, yea, what fear, yea, what vehement desire, yea, what zeal, yea, what revenge! In all things ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter."

What Paul refers to here as Godly sorrow is none other than what we would call guilty feelings. Here the feeling of guilt was caused by only one thing; confrontation with the **fact** of your guilt. **Guilt makes you feel bad**, but that's good. That is the tender mercy of God. If you didn't feel bad, you would not know that you had a sin problem. It is God's idea that your conscience (that still small voice of God the Holy Ghost, who has been trying all along to keep you from your sin) would work in you until it worked complete repentance. Then by the grace of God you could begin to commune with him and experience the peace that passes understanding.

What is the remedy for both guilt and guilty feelings? **Repentance**. This is the solution from Genesis to Revelation, and it is the only solution that will not only make you feel better but will actually cleanse you. No amount of counseling or searching your past will cleanse you of your sin. No amount of rehearsing your sins will bring you release. In

fact, as you remember your sins, you multiply your whoredoms. (Ezek. 23:19) Mercy and forgiveness only come by repentance.

Proverbs 28:13

"He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy."

If you justify your sin, or hide it, or push it down until you forget it you may get rid of your guilty feelings but you will not get rid of the fact of your guilt. Even if you can get a counselor, priest, friend or pastor to acquit you or say that you are justified, you will live in guilt.

Notice that mercy only comes with confession and forsaking sin. This is true repentance. Not just telling God that you did wrong. He knows what you did. Confession is not giving God the latest news but it is agreeing with God that what you have done is wicked and deserves punishment. Then forsaking that act. Asking God to deal the blow of death to your desire to sin. Hating your sin, and as the Holy Ghost said through Paul in **II Corinthians 10:6** *"having in a readiness to revenge all disobedience when your obedience is fulfilled."*

What about "false guilt"? This is a possible occurrence since we do have to deal with the accuser of the brethren, the devil. But the information I have just covered should equip you to deal with any attack by the accuser. The devil continually attacked Jesus with accusations of sin and lawlessness. He simply dismissed them realizing where these accusations originated.

If you will follow these simple steps I can assure you that this will never be a problem again. When you have guilty feelings:

1. Ask yourself "Am I guilty?" (remember guilt is a fact, not a feeling).

2. If the answer is yes, Pray and confess your sin and forsake it. Ask God to judge it, condemn it, and cast it as far as the east is from the west. Then believe that He will cleanse you from **all** unrighteousness.

3. If you are not guilty, stop listening to the devil and the counsel of the ungodly and go on with God.

Know this, that if you are guilty the devil will try to talk you out of confession and repentance, knowing that it is the only way for you to get into communion with God. Guilt, if not dealt with using the weapon of repentance can kill you. Don't be caught in this trap. Be sober, be vigilant, for your adversary the devil goes about as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour. (II Peter 5:8)

You do not have to feel guilty. You only need to repent!