

# Identifying the Source of Guilt

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## **Identifying the Source Of Guilt**

Feelings of guilt are responsible for the greatest percentage of people's mental misery and agonizing anguish of heart. When a person feels guilty, for whatever reason, he feels he deserves to be punished. When he has done wrong by committing an offense, he feels wretched, depressed, and unhappy. A person soon finds that the thoughts in his guilt-ridden mind are like nests of tormenting, stinging "scorpions" that bite the soul with their accusations, censures, and condemnations.

Guilty souls are conscious of their dark, deep, secret sins. Consequently, they live with their minds paralyzed with fear lest their sins be found out and their reputations destroyed. Guilty souls suffer unspeakable torment as they perpetually shrink in dread and distrust of those around them for fear their sins will be discovered.

Just as rust eats away at something made of iron until its original form is ultimately destroyed, so guilt eats away at the security and serenity of the soul until the soul is stripped of all peace and harmony. With its tormenting teeth, guilt perpetually gnaws away at the soul until it devours the soul's peace and harmony bit by bit. Thus, the very hope and faith of the spirit are defiled, consumed, and destroyed.

Guilt bites into man's spirit like a poisonous adder, leaving its deadly, noxious venom which kills the hope and faith of the spirit.

Guilt is God's hard taskmaster who oversees man's sinful soul with exacting severity. Guilt also is

an avenging friend who afflicts man's conscience with the deserved awareness of the wrongs he has done and the just punishment he should receive for his unrighteous acts. Because man's sin precedes his guilt, his guilt follows behind with its cutting lashes to sting and lacerate his sense of conscience, producing miserable memories and painful remembrances of his offenses and wrongs. Oh, what a sorrowful state is guilt! The awesome consequences of sin long survive committing the sinful act.

Deceit and lies are the wicked, treacherous allies of guilt. They lurk at every crook and turn in the soul, trying to transfer guilt off on to someone else in a vain endeavor to defend the soul against guilt's stinging lashes.

Lest the soul be exposed to shame and punishment, which might cause the soul to repent and to turn to Christ Jesus the Saviour, deceit and lies cover the soul with their dark clouds so that the truthful rays of Light from Christ will not shine through.

Jesus discoursed upon the subject of those who hate to come to the Light because their deeds are evil.

And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and **men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.** For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved (John 3:19,20).

The most deplorable condition of the soul exists in those who persist in their *willful* darkness and ignorance.

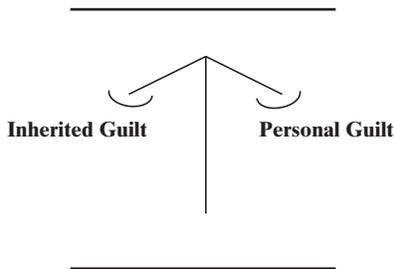
Christ's Light exposes man's guilt so that he can repent and be freed from sin and its guilt. How unspeakably foolish, then, for a person to take up lies and deceit in the vain and useless effort to transfer his guilt to someone else because he wants to free himself from guilt through his own efforts. Man cannot dispose of his guilt — the Blood of Jesus Christ must wash it away.

Men love darkness because it is an excuse for their evil deeds. In the darkness, they do not have to assume personal responsibility for doing something about their evil deeds. They can use deceit and lies to excuse their guilt.

But the Light of Truth is sweet to the sincere soul because it helps the soul to humble itself, to confess its guilt and wrong, and to repent before the LORD Jesus Christ.

For example, husbands or wives who are guilty of adultery have to depend continually upon their corrupt friends called Deceit and Lies, with their attendant dark clouds, in order to cover their guilt, unless they are willing to come and take Christ's precious Blood for cleansing from their sin and guilt.

God's Word reveals that man has two classes of guilt: inherited guilt and personal guilt.



## I. Inherited Guilt

The sin and death that have been passed down to the human race through Adam the First have brought inherited guilt to all men.

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** (Romans 3:19).

Man's inherited guilt from Adam the First prevents him from being able to justify himself by any sort of works. Consequently, it is utter vanity to look for justification by the works of the Law. How can a *guilty* man possibly produce *good* works?

As sinners born into a sinful world, we can find justification only by faith in Christ's Mercy and Grace. The Law only discovers our crime and our guilt, but the precious Mercy, Grace, and Blood of Jesus Christ deliver us from our crimes and guilt.

The whole world lies in wickedness:

And we know that we are of God, and **the whole world lieth in wickedness** (I John 5:19).

Therefore, the world is guilty before God and is subject to punishment.

It is this inherited guilt that, from the beginning of our life in this world, makes us feel something is wrong — something is missing — and it makes us fearful to die. We *all* are *guilty* children and, by nature, children of wrath.

Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and **were by nature the children of wrath**, even as others (Ephesians 2:3).

By inheritance, we all stand guilty before God, the *Omniscient Judge*, Who cannot be deceived by our deceit and lies. Since we all stand guilty and naked before God, we need a Saviour to take away our guilt and to give us a Garment of Righteousness to cover our nakedness.

Jesus Christ died to shed His Precious Blood in order to wash away our inherited guilt; and He arose again to bring us His Garment of Righteousness with which to cover our nakedness.

## **II. Personal Guilt**

We cannot blame all our guilt upon Adam the First, however! We all personally have sinned against God's Moral Law in one point or another.

For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one *point*, **he is guilty of all** (James 2:10).

We have to assume the responsibility for our personal offenses against God's Moral Law.

If we disobey God's Word in one point, we show contempt for God's Sovereign Authority and for His Divine Word. Therefore, we stand *personally guilty*.

We rid ourself of personal guilt the same way we rid ourself of inherited guilt. We come to Jesus

Christ, the Saviour, and confess our guilt and ask Him to cleanse us with His Precious Blood.

Failure to repent of guilt is the cause of most people's sorrow. The widespread existence of misery, woe, and sorrow is evidenced by the increased number of people who take hard drugs. People take "uppers" in order to stand themselves up so that they can walk through the day; then, at night they take "downers" to go to sleep. There has to be a reason for this pattern of behavior. The reason is that such persons are sorrowful, sad, and depressed in their heart. Why? There are different reasons for sorrow and sadness, but one of the great reasons for sorrow is the feeling of *guilt*.

People carry more feelings of guilt than they would ever dream or realize. Psychiatrists tell us that this is true. They also try to tell us that the way to get rid of our feelings of guilt is to bring them out into the open by talking about them — as though this were a magical way to make them go away. But talking does not rid us of the feelings of guilt and remorse that we have at the bottom of our soul, even subconsciously and unconsciously. Doctors also try to help us relieve our guilt by having us transpose our inherited and personal guilt onto our parents, our companions, our friends, and our co-workers.

Many times people are not consciously aware of why they feel guilty. This is because they carry their inherited guilt in the unconscious realm of their beings, and they have shoved the personal guilt of their sin so far down into the subconscious realm of their minds that they cannot remember the sin; yet, the guilty feelings, the effects of their sin, are still inside them, making them miserable.

The Bible says that without the shedding of Blood there is *no* remission of sins (Hebrews 9:22). If there had been some other way that man could have been rid of his sin and guilt, without Jesus Christ having to go to the Cross, then it would have been ridiculous for God to have sent His Son to go to Calvary's Cross and pay such a tremendous price to free man from sin and guilt.

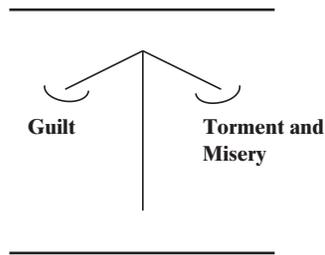
Guilt is the reason we feel sad and sorrowful, and it is why we have such a heavy, grieved feeling inside. Some people describe feelings of guilt as heavy, burdensome, draggy feelings, or depressed feelings in the pit of their stomachs. When these feelings come, if we will call upon Jesus Christ to help us look back into our past and, then, ask ourselves, "What wrong *thought* have I had? What wrong *act* have I done? What has been wrong in my *behavior*?" then, Jesus Christ will help us identify the source of our heavy, depressed feelings. Once we have discovered that sin and guilt are the culprits, we can confess, repent, and, by faith, give our sin and guilt over to Christ's Blood — the River for Remission of Sin and Guilt.

Sometimes we think sin is committing adultery or stealing or doing outward, surface things; but there is more to sinning than this. Sin is rebellion against God's Sovereign Authority, and it is distrust of His Holy, Divine Nature. The Truth is that God desires to give us the best in all things.

The Bible says that whatsoever is not of faith is sin. When we begin to doubt that God hears and answers our prayer or when we doubt that He can give us strength to walk in the Footsteps of Jesus — all these doubting thoughts are sins. Consequently, it will not be long before we will feel the depressing weight of guilt.

Guilt is the slender, tender nerve of sorrow that runs through the sense of conscience in the soul. When we touch a nerve in our body, we get a tremendous, painful reaction. Some of the most tender nerves, such as those on the face, produce the most painful reaction because they are the most sensitive. Likewise, guilt is the slender, tender nerve of sensitive sorrow in the soul. So after our sin has generated guilty feelings and someone pricks our guilt by putting his finger forcefully on our sensitive nerve of sorrow, we react with pain, exhibiting our hatred, wrath, and strife against the person who touched our guilt.

Torment and misery also are yoked to guilt.



Guilt in our soul makes us feel tormented and miserable. God allows guilt to harass and to persecute the soul, repeatedly inflicting suffering on it because He hopes that the soul will confess its guilt and repent. God also allows guilt to bring unhappiness, wretchedness, and discomfort to the soul, hoping that the soul will seek the happy, joyful, and refreshing state of Christ's Pardon and Forgiveness.

However, if we do not seek Jesus Christ and His Pardon and Forgiveness, our soul reacts wrongfully by manifesting its impatience, anger, and hatefulness through our disposition and attitude. Torment

accompanies guilt, and it inflicts mental pain and agony by reminding us of our sins. Thus, as guilty souls, we live tormented and tortured by our memories of the wrongs we have committed. This is the condition of a soul before it comes to Jesus and repents of its sins. What a contrast this soul is to the soul that has been forgiven, cleansed, and justified by Jesus Christ's Blood and, then, filled with Christ's Guiltless Joy, Happiness, and Comfort!

So when we begin to feel miserable and tormented by our guilt, a lot of times we blame the wrong things or the wrong people for our guilty feelings. We put our finger on everything and everyone but the true root of the matter.

When we are miserable, we sometimes go shopping or talk on the telephone or redecorate the house or buy new furniture, a new boat, or go on a trip or in order to escape looking into the root of our unhappy, miserable condition. We do all sorts of conscious things to deliver ourself from our misery, momentarily, but, right around the corner, our torment and misery resurface, and we wonder what is going on inside our being. Because we do not realize that torment and misery are yoked to guilt, we always deal with the *effects* of our guilt — the torment and misery — and we never address the *cause* — our guilt! But if we lay the ax of repentance to the root of our problem — our guilt — and beseech the LORD Jesus Christ to cover us with His Precious Blood, we will experience His Guiltless Joy and His Divine Comfort instead of our torment and misery.

When we experience torment and misery, it is time to get on our face before God and say, "Jesus, how have I offended You? What have I

*thought* that is wrong? What have I *said* that is wrong? What have I *done* that is wrong?

I can assure you, through my personal experience with God, that Jesus Christ is faithful to show us when and what we have said, done or thought that was wrong.

Just stop and think back over your day and ask, as the old song asks, “Have I wounded any soul today?” Then, say, “LORD, forgive.” We need to think back over every day to see what we may have said or done that was wrong. Then, through prayer, we need to unload our soul of any guilt of sin before we go to bed. We will not need a “downer,” then, to go peacefully to sleep. We already will be “down,” at rest, because Jesus Christ will have cleansed us and *freed us from the torment and misery of guilt*.

Guilt chains us to a nest of scorpions, which are our remorseful memories that sting and bite us, bringing their poisonous, tormenting, and miserable reminders to our soul.

We do not sin and, then, forget our sin just because we have wiped it out of our conscious mind by engaging in a lot of activities. Although we may consciously replace the wrong things we have done with a lot of other things, the wrong and the guilt remain active in our subconsciousness. Hence, in the night season, when we are asleep, the guilty scorpions, with their torment and misery, are unleashed from their nest and crawl forth to torment and torture us in our dreams. Although we consciously can erase a lot of guilt while we are awake, we are powerless to keep the scorpions of our memories chained when we are asleep.

People who are restless as they sleep, tossing from one side of the bed to the other, are being attacked subconsciously by the scorpions of guilt

that sting and bite them through their torturous memories of the wrongs they have done.

For example, once, when I was witnessing for Jesus among the poor people on skid row, I found a woman who was bedridden and living in a shack, with no one to care for her or bring her food. So, I faithfully looked after her. Daily, I made chicken noodle soup for her since that was all she could eat.

One day she asked me to pray to Jesus for her healing. So I bowed on my knees in prayer beside her bed, and while I was praying, the LORD spoke and said, "Tell her to repent of her adulteries, and I will heal her." I told her what Jesus had said, but she vehemently denied being guilty of any such thing. Consequently, the LORD did not heal her body, for she would have continued in her sin. She was unrepentant.

She became deathly ill and was taken to the charity hospital. One night the hospital superintendent called and asked me to come to sit with her since they did not expect her to live until morning. So I went.

Although she was in her bed asleep, she turned and tossed and cried and cried, saying from a subconscious level, "LORD, please forgive me of those adulteries." She would not consciously confess her guilt, but while she was in a deep, drugged medicated sleep, her subconscious soul cried out in torment and misery. The poor woman died that night without ever regaining consciousness.

How much better to confess our guilt, to repent of our sins, and to lay hold of the Blood of Jesus Christ while we can experience forgiveness in our conscious mind.

Our subconscious mind does not sleep. During the day, it works, even when our conscious mind is holding it down and keeping it under control, to some extent. But when we go to sleep and the control from our conscious mind is shut off, the subconscious mind is free to do its greater work of tormenting and torturing the soul through dreams.

Our conscience is a faithful computer to register everything we do. It is a faithful accuser to convict and convince us when we have done wrong. People say, "Let your conscience be your guide," (usually because they do not want to obey God's Moral Laws). I believe in listening to your conscience, too, but those who preach this usually do not practice it.

Guilt is like strong chains of iron. We may do something wrong, and though we may feel, *consciously*, that what we did was all right, guilt will rise up like chains of iron to bind our conscience to torment and misery. Our "guilt machine" is a blessing, if we allow its torment and misery to push us to confession and repentance before Jesus Christ. By laying hold of the precious Blood of Jesus for cleansing, pardon, and justification, we can be freed from our sin and guilt. Remember, God is faithful to show us our guilt!

When we are feeling depressed and sad, we need to go before the LORD and say, "LORD, what have I said? What have I done that has been unkind, unjust, and unloving to my fellow neighbor and to God?" He will be faithful to show us so that we can confess our guilt and be freed from the chains that bind us to misery, sadness, and depression. Christ's precious Blood will free us from sin and guilt.

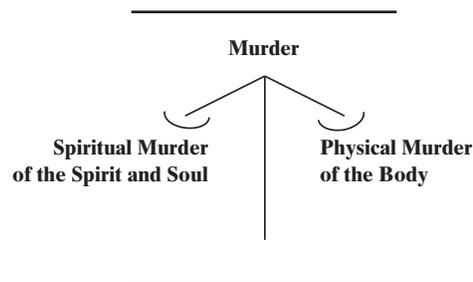
If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. **If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins,** and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us (I John 1:8-10).

The Blood of Jesus Christ removes ALL confessed sin and, therefore, ALL guilt!

If we want to examine why people are so miserable and sorrowful, we can find the answer by looking in God's Word.

So shalt thou **put away the *guilt of innocent blood*** from among you, when thou shalt do *that which is* right in the sight of the LORD (Deuteronomy 21:9).

This was God's instruction to Israel. She was to put away the guilt of innocent blood from her. There is a dual meaning to this Command: one is literal, and one is spiritual.



Under the Law, if someone sinned by taking an innocent life, God made provision for him to be cleansed if he repented of his murderous deed.

When a slain man was found and the murderer was unknown, God required the blood of a young heifer, which had not walked under a yoke, to be offered for the cleansing of the land and the surrounding villages.

Because the murdered victim had been cut off from future usefulness and fruitfulness, a young heifer that had not known future usefulness and fruitfulness also had to be cut off in order to cleanse the land and the community from future unfruitfulness and lack of usefulness.

The blood of the heifer was a picture of how Jesus was cut off as a young man from future usefulness and fruitfulness in the earth because He had to go the Cross and shed His Blood so that mankind might be cleansed from the guilt of murder.

In the “Sermon on the Mount,” Jesus taught about spiritual murder, which is “heart” murder and “tongue” murder. In His Sermon, Jesus said that when we call our brother a fool we are committing a form of “tongue” murder. We usually feel miserable after we have used our tongue to slay someone, which is “tongue” murder, or after we have thought bad thoughts against someone in our heart, which is “heart” murder. How many times have we experienced feelings of torment and misery because of our guilt over what we have said with our tongue or what we have thought in our heart? How many times have we falsely accused someone and found later that what we have said or have thought was not true?

Have you ever, for instance, had someone visit you, and later, when you momentarily could not

find a certain object in the house, thought within yourself, “I think my visitor must have taken that”? I had this experience once as a young Christian. Soon after someone had visited our house, a member of our family noticed a treasured knife was missing, so he said, “I am sure our visitor took my knife.” And I said, “Oh, no, I am sure you will find the knife. It is here somewhere.” In the most miraculous circumstance, then, God uncovered the knife. It had not been taken at all.

We do not have to point to any one member of the family; we can point to our own guilt. However, we call *our* wrong accusations “jumping to conclusions.” Then after we have jumped to conclusions, we treat it as a light thing. We do not treat our wrong thoughts or actions as something that should be taken to the LORD or as something for which we should repent. Afterward, we do not realize that our remorseful, depressed feelings are feelings of guilt, which are the effects of the words that we have said with our tongue and the thoughts that we have generated in our heart against others. We need to experience utmost care in what we think in our heart and what we say with our tongue.

God’s Word is a great mirror that will reflect the Light of Truth upon our heart, revealing our errors and our wrongs. As we live before the mirror of God’s Word, it causes many of our errors and wrongs to be exposed by the Light of Truth. Consequently, we can see where we need to repent — even as Christians. Not all our thoughts, words, and deeds are like Jesus Christ. We *all have sinned* and *do sin* and *do come short* of God’s Glory.

Exodus, chapter twenty, uncovers some other reasons for our guilty feelings. It says, “Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain; for

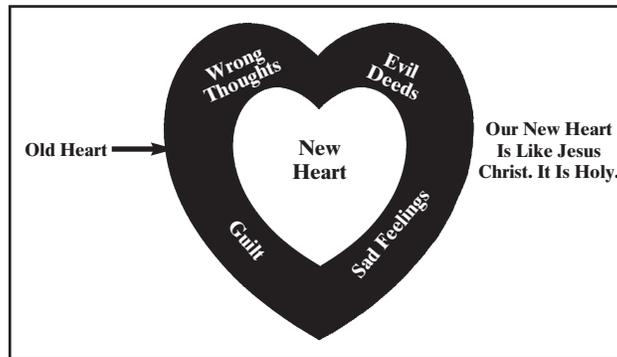
the LORD will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.” How carelessly people use the Name of the LORD. For instance, when we kneel down to pray, asking God in the Name of Jesus Christ to do this or that for us, then, later, begin to doubt whether or not God has heard our prayer, we have taken the Name of Jesus Christ in vain. His Name is powerful, and He says clearly in His Word that if we ask anything in His Name in faith believing, according to His Divine Will, He *will* do it.

This is often the reason we feel sorrowful and depressed. If we will learn, as we walk on with Jesus Christ, to examine our thought-life, our word-life, and our action-life, carefully, we will be able to discover who the “parents” are of our feelings. The more we are able to discern and to separate between what we have done right and what we have done wrong, the more we will be able to pinpoint our guilt. Then, we can repent of our wrong and ask Jesus Christ to forgive us. As a result of our repentance, Jesus will restore clean, pure, peaceful feelings in our heart, and we will be happy because happiness is peace.

If you are saved, you can remember how clean, peaceful, and happy you felt right after you had accepted Jesus Christ as your Saviour. After you had repented, you felt so totally clean and happy. There were no miserable feelings, no guilt, no depression in your heart — only joy and peace — and everyone looked so beautiful and wonderful to you. What happened? Why did you not feel that way all the time?

The answer is that we incur guilt along our way, day by day, and God does not hold us guiltless. Because of our guilt, we feel unclean, agitated, and unhappy. We are not talking about having lost our

Salvation. When we accepted Jesus, He became our Saviour. We were saved. So we still are saved from the *penalty* of sin, but even as Christians, we need to repent of our thoughts, attitudes, dispositions, and all the things in us that are *unlike* Jesus Christ. We do not lose all the carnal disposition in our old heart just because we have a new heart. (We receive a new, clean heart at the moment of our Salvation.)



However, in our old heart, we are still guilty, many times, of having wrong thoughts, actions and feelings. Left unrepented in our old heart, our sins produce guilt that becomes the wicked “mother” to a thousand fears and troublesome thoughts.

When we begin to fear, we need to look back and see what we feel guilty about. We only have fear when we feel guilty about something. When the soul is emptied of guilt, there is no fear in the old heart. We can judge by the presence of fear in our old heart that guilt also is inside our old heart because guilt is the wicked “mother” of fears.

When we feel fearful, we should locate the source of our fear, which will be our feelings of guilt over something we have done, thought, or

spoken that is wrong. Having located the source of our fear — our guilt — we can repent, and Jesus will cleanse our heart and set us free from fears.

It is so wonderful to have Jesus set us free, and He *will* set us free if we ask Him. Our Divine High Priest will apply His Omnipresent, Divine Blood to our old heart and our soul and wash away our guilt, today!

How blessed we are to know how to identify the source of our guilt so that we can have our guilt removed through repentance and faith in the shed Blood of Jesus Christ.

