Forgiving Yourself
Psalm 32:1-5

Many Christians feel the nagging ________ of shame and guilt. They still ________ over sins that were long forgiven by God, but they don’t know how to forgive themselves of their transgression. In today’s study, we’re going to ________ how to forgive ourselves. A troubled person once came to me with a serious ____________.

The problem is not God's ability to forgive the ___________ believer, but in the believer’s willingness to forgive himself. God is willing to forgive, but some people don’t ________ forgiven, or feel saved. A person who has never forgiven himself feels ________ in his heart every day. When David sinned with Bathsheba, he ______________, “For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me” (Psalm 51:3). David felt God’s hand upon him because of his ____. He felt that his sins were “a heavy burden” (Psalm 38:3-4). Your sins may be too heavy for you too, but there is a God-given ____________ to shame and guilt.

Our reading today comes from a Psalm of David, Psalm 32:1-5.

When a person sins, he sins against God, but many ignore the ________ that sin causes to the person who commits it. Sin is an __________ against God, but it’s also against one's self. The Bible personifies wisdom in Proverbs 8:36, “But he who sins against me __________ himself; all those who hate me love death.” Wisdom is God’s __________ will for our lives. When people go against God’s wisdom and His will, they live with the __________ of guilt and shame.

Read what the inspired apostle Paul wrote in Galatians 6:7-8. Sin is the cause of the __________ heartaches of mankind. A person can’t live for sin and self and expect to find the blessing of God. The conscience is a God-given function of the ___________. The conscience works as a __________ monitor praising us or condemning us. Read how the Bible describes this function in Romans 2:14-15. When a person sins, his conscience ________ his heart and that causes ________. This pricked conscience causes a person to be grieved at himself; he can lose all __________ for himself. The prodigal son no longer felt __________ to be called the son of his father. You might think the conscience is a bad thing, but it was the prodigal son’s conscience and the terrible effects of his sin that brought him to his ________. God didn’t give us a conscience to __________ us, but to keep us from doing what is wrong and to encourage us to do what is right. When we ________ to listen to our conscience, we end up hurting ourselves.

Everyone has a conscience, but not every conscience uses the Word of God as a __________ for what is right and wrong. Many people sin against God but don’t realize that what they did was
__________. They rely on their own experience or their own judgment rather than take the time to ______ the Scriptures and _______ what God says about the matter.

Other people allow sin to ___________ the conscience. Read the Bible’s warning in Hebrews 3:12-13. I worry far more about the person whose conscience is past ____________ than the person who feels great ___________ for his sin. When a person gets past feeling ___________, it’s not likely that he will _________. If a person sees no need to repent or won’t repent, he likely won’t ever get _______ with God.

Of all of God’s blessings, nothing is more ______________ than forgiveness. Forgiveness is not the _______ as forgetting. Forgiveness is “forgetting against.” When God forgives, He no longer _______ our sins against us (2 Corinthians 5:19-20). As part of the new covenant, God promises, “For I will be merciful toward their iniquities, and I will ______________ their sins no more” (Hebrews 8:12).

David, by inspiration, wrote, “He (that is, God) does not ______ with us according to our sins, nor ______ us according to our iniquities. For as ______ as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his steadfast ______ toward those who fear him; as far as the east is from the west, so far does he __________ our transgressions from us” (Psalm 103:10-12). When God forgives, He no longer thinks of us in terms of our _______ iniquities. He removed the offenses from His ________, but He keeps us close to His _________.

Forgiveness _______ the shame and guilt by blotting out the offenses and settling the matter once and for all by the ______ of Jesus Christ (1 Peter 2:24). Forgiveness means putting to death the _____ man of sin (Romans 6:4-7) and making all things _______ (2 Corinthians 5:17). When you forgive yourself, you forget your _______ sins against yourself. You no longer hold those sins against yourself, and you will be at ________ with yourself.

You cannot forgive yourself until you have made a ________ in your heart and life. That is, you must ________. Many people seek forgiveness but they never ________ their sins behind. You’ll never find peace if you’re unwilling to ___________. If you commit the same old sins over and over, you’ll keep on having the same _________ and _________ over and over.

Read what the Bible says in Colossians 3:5-10.

Here are four things that you can do to forgive yourself. First, be sure that you have genuinely _______. Repentance is not only a turning _______ from sin; it’s also a turning _______ God. The Thessalonians turned from _______ to serve the living God (1 Thessalonians 1:9). You’ll have a hard time forgiving yourself if you fail to _______ your life up with God. The Lord Jesus warns us about giving up sin but not filling our lives with ___________ things. Read Matthew 12:43-45.

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Second, to forgive yourself, focus your attention on what you have __________, not on what you were! The apostle Paul was __________ of terrible sins when he was Saul of Tarsus. He was guilty of violence, murder, slander, and blasphemy. He persecuted the church beyond measure and cast people into prison for their ___________. In 1 Timothy 1:12-16 Paul said, “I thank him who has given me ___________, Christ Jesus our Lord, because he judged me faithful, appointing me to his service, though formerly I was a blasphemer, persecutor, and insolent opponent. But I received mercy because I had acted ignorantly in unbelief, and the grace of our Lord overflowed for me with the _______ and _______ that are in Christ Jesus. The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to ________ sinners, of whom I am foremost. But I received mercy for this reason, that in me, as the foremost, Jesus Christ might display his perfect patience as an example to those who were to believe in him for eternal life.”

Paul couldn’t change his past, but he didn’t __________ on the past. Paul said he was “forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the _______ for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 3:13-14). He focused on what God was __________ in his life and what God wanted him to do. Knowing God’s forgiveness, he could put his _______ behind and focus on the will of God. He could say, “For I am the least of the apostles, unworthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me was not in vain” (1 Corinthians 15:9-10).

A person who forgives himself can say, “I'm not what I _______ to be.” God is more interested in what you are __________ in Christ than in what you “used to be.” You can’t change the past, and it’s not necessary for you to do so to forgive yourself. What you can do is change yourself and your __________ toward the past by becoming the person God wishes you to be. In doing this realize that no one is _______ but God. When you start living for God, you no longer have to be __________ of your past. You can be __________ that you serve Christ.

Third, trust _______ rather than your feelings. Feelings reflect perceptions, but these feelings are not always _______ to reality. Feelings accurately reflect how we perceive things to be but they don’t always reflect reality. The brothers of Joseph _______ him to some slave traders, and Joseph went to Egypt. The brothers, however, _______ that a wild animal had killed Joseph and they dipped his coat of many colors in blood. The brothers _______ to their father, Jacob. Jacob refused to be comforted (Genesis 37:35). Jacob believed Joseph was _______ and he mourned, but Joseph wasn’t dead. Jacob believed the brothers’ report but he didn’t know the _______. Jacob was ___________ and so were his feelings.

People often feel unforgiven, even when God __________ in the Bible to forgive. So _______ God, not your feelings. Trust the Bible to tell you the _______. God doesn’t _______. God can and He will keep His ___________. The Lord Jesus said, “Truly, truly, I say to you, that everyone who commits sin is the _______ of sin.” But he also said, “So if the Son makes you _______, you will be free indeed” (John 8:34, 36).
Fourth, draw ______ to God. If you wish to be at peace with God, don’t ______ with the sins of the world. The Bible says, “Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he’ll flee from you. Draw ______ to God and He’ll draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded” (James 4:7-8). When God ______ in your heart and life, when you choose to draw ______ to God and resist the devil, you’ll find your life growing better and better.

The Bible says, “Therefore whoever wishes to be a ______ of the world makes himself an ________ of God.” The double-minded fellow who wants to be a friend to God and a friend to the world ______ finds peace or assurance. If you want a ______ conscience, “submit to God” (James 4:4). When you draw close to God and start resisting the devil, you’ll find the _________ to live a righteous and holy life. You’ll find that things that used to tempt you aren’t _________ any more. You can forgive yourself, and God can _______ you.

People think they can get away with their sins, but there are always two persons who know how and when we have sinned no matter how _______ we make it. God knows and we know. David thought he had hidden his sin with Bathsheba, but it wasn’t hidden from his own _______. David said, “When I kept _______ about my sin, my body wasted away through my groaning all day long. For day and night, Your hand was heavy upon me; My vitality was drained away as with the fever heat of summer. I acknowledged my sin to You, and my iniquity I didn’t hide; I said, ‘I will ______ my transgressions to the LORD’; and You _________ the guilt of my sin” (Psalm 32:3-5).

God forgives us so that we can forgive ___________. We can _____ ourselves of the old self and be _______ again. God can do away with our _______ of sin. When we get right with God, we find peace with God and we find peace with ourselves. Forgiveness takes place in the ______ of God; it’s a ______ of mercy. You can’t _______ it. Mercy takes place when God does something for us that we’re not _________ of doing for ourselves. Your ____________, your forgiveness, is the gift of God.

But you have to _______ that gift. That means being honest with yourself and honest with God in ____________ the sin. To become a Christian, we must trust God and __________ in the Lord Jesus Christ. We must turn from sin and turn to God; that’s ____________. We must __________ Jesus Christ as the Son of God and as our Lord before others; and we must be ___________ in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of our sins. Baptism into Christ is an immersion in water of a penitent believer. If you need to do these things, why not contact a nearby church of Christ and get your heart and your soul right with God.