



HOW CAN I FORGIVE MYSELF?

JIM HINTON

I. IS MY GUILT LEGITIMATE?

There are at least three different types of guilt...

1. True/legitimate guilt

Is temporary, moves me closer to God and makes me happier because it results in repentance

For the kind of sorrow God wants us to experience leads us away from sin and results in salvation. There's no regret for that kind of sorrow. But worldly sorrow, which lacks repentance, results in spiritual death.

2 Corinthians 7:10 (NLT)

2. False guilt

Is feeling guilty about things I shouldn't, continues after I have repented, and makes me miserable

3. Shame

Guilt is feeling bad about what happened—shame is feeling bad about who I am

Guilt says I've done something wrong; shame says there is something wrong with me. Guilt says I've made a mistake; shame says I am a mistake. Guilt says what I did was not good; shame says I am no good.

John Bradshaw

For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago.

Ephesians 2:10 (NLT)

II. HOW CAN I FORGIVE MYSELF?

1. Choose to believe the promises of God—not the lies of the enemy

Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they don't know what they are doing."
Luke 23:34 (NLT)

He does not punish us for all our sins; he does not deal harshly with us, as we deserve. For his unfailing love toward those who fear him is as great as the height of the heavens above the earth. He has removed our sins as far from us as the east is from the west. The LORD is like a father to his children, tender and compassionate to those who fear him.

Psalms 103:10-13 (NLT)

There is no God like you. You forgive those who are guilty of sin; you don't look at the sins of your people who are left alive. You will not stay angry forever, because you enjoy being kind. You will have mercy on us again; you will conquer our sins. You will throw away all our sins into the deepest part of the sea.

Micah 7:18-19 (NCV)

God is faithful and reliable. If we confess our sins, he forgives them and cleanses us from everything we've done wrong.

1 John 1:9 (GWT)

2. Trust the facts of God's forgiveness—and not my feelings

The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it?

Jeremiah 17:9 (ESV)

When you were spiritually dead because of your sins...God made you alive with Christ, and he forgave all our sins. He canceled the debt, which listed all the rules we failed to follow. He took away that record with its rules and nailed it to the cross.

Colossians 2:13-14 (NCV)

But he took our suffering on him and felt our pain for us...But he was wounded for the wrong we did; he was crushed for the evil we did. The punishment, which made us well, was given to him, and we are healed because of his wounds.

Isaiah 53:4-5 (NCV)

3. Realize that not forgiving myself is arrogance—not humility

- **I make my standards higher than Gods—which makes me God**
- **I can't give someone else something I can't give myself**

Jesus answered, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind.' This is the first and most important command. And the second command is like the first: 'Love your neighbor as you love yourself.'

Matthew 22:37-39 (NCV)

To be a Christian means to forgive the inexcusable because God has forgiven the inexcusable in you...If God forgives us - we must forgive ourselves. Otherwise, it is almost like setting up ourselves as a higher tribunal than him.

C.S. Lewis

4. Confess my sin to someone I trust

Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The earnest prayer of a righteous person has great power and produces wonderful results.

James 5:16 (NLT)

5. Remember that God can still use my mistakes for good

You tried to harm me, but God made it turn out for the best, so that he could save all these people, as he is now doing.

Genesis 50:19 (CEV)