

Captive's Corner



"Bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ"

2 Corinthians 10:5

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The Challenge of Forgiving Yourself

To forgive includes no longer harboring anger or resentment for wrongs done. Forgiveness comes in many forms. Some strive to forgive others because they feel in their heart this is the best method of coping. Others request forgiveness because they know the sorrow of living with their own regrets. A natural desire of the heart is to be absolved of our wrong doing because we feel this will bring about a freedom unlike any other. However, the Word of God places no importance on forgiveness of oneself.

A natural desire of the heart is to be absolved of our wrong doing because we feel this will bring about a freedom unlike any other. However, the Word of God places no importance on forgiveness of oneself. This may very well be because man left to himself can find no absolution (Romans 3:10-23; 6:23). Many seek and find the only true answer to their dilemma in divine intervention. Only in Jesus Christ can we find that true salvation and freedom that depends solely on His work for us and not on anything we can do for ourselves. Something that is common to all is that we have done things we wish we had not. Dwelling on forgiving oneself can

be overwhelming. Thankfully, it is not a necessity to obtain deliverance. We can cast all our cares on a loving and living Savior who will provide for us all the forgiveness, mercy, and assurance we need based on His cross-work and not on anything we do for ourselves (Romans 5:6-11; 3:21-26; 1 Peter 5:7; Isaiah 43:25; Psalm 103:11-12; Philippians 4:6-7).

We can not change the past. The Apostle Paul tells us that we should press on toward the goal and not dwell on where we have been or what we have done. By becoming a new creation in Christ we can find refuge from all the anger and resentment we carry with us every day, even if that anger or

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resentment is toward ourselves (2 Corinthians 5:15-17; Philippians 3:12-16). In this world, we are continually faced with the need to forgive others or the need to be forgiven by others. We even ask for it from or offer it to our enemies. Yet, we continue to struggle with our own self-analysis and the idea of forgiving ourselves (Colossians 3:13; Ephesians 4:2, 26). Our only hope is to come to the

realization that we must reckon ourselves dead to self and trust completely that real freedom does not, nor will it ever, depend upon what we do, but only on what Jesus Christ has already done for us (Galatians 2:20; Ephesians 2:1-10). God has dealt with our old man and all his deeds. God has put us in union with His Son Jesus so that His death on the cross was our death too. This is condemnation of our old man (self). God's Word now tells us simply to believe it and live in light of it. Therefore, we should consider ourselves dead to any temptation to satisfy the old man and present ourselves to God to be used for righteousness, knowing He has fully forgiven us and accepted us in His Son. We can now live a new life because as we shared in His death, so also we share in His resurrection life

(Romans 6:1-13; 8:1-13). God's Spirit indwells every believer and empowers him to live out this new life from above. Wow! New life from God, empowered by His Spirit and in union with the Lord Jesus, now that's living!

People are perishing all over the world, going to their graves wrapped in the struggle of self forgiveness when the only

forgiveness that should matter is that of our Father in heaven. God has accepted us in His Son. If Jesus' finished work is good enough for God, then it must be for us also (Ephesians 1:6-7). In Christ we can be free of our guilt and past memories. "If the Son makes you free you shall be free indeed" (John 8:36). True peace of mind comes as we continually reckon ourselves dead to sin and alive to God. The life we live now, we

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live to God, not to self, Satan, or the world (Romans 6:11; Galatians 2:20; 6:14; 2 Timothy 2:26).

It is important that we take a moment to reflect and consider all the inner animosity we may have. At the same time, we need to see the shed blood of Christ as fully accepted by God as

payment for all our sin. Christ has born fully the payment for our wrongs, and we have died with Him (Romans 5:6-11; 6:8). Therefore, extinguish (or put to death) your animosity and replace it with (or put on) love, gentleness, kindness, and concern for others. Only in Jesus Christ can this be done (Ephesians 4:22-24; Colossians 3:5; Romans 8:13). None of this is possible unless you

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have received Jesus Christ into your life as your Lord and Savior because only He can change your heart of stone to flesh. Then, suddenly, forgiving yourself need not be an issue any longer because Jesus not only dealt once and for all with sin on the cross but with self also (Ezekiel 36:26; John 3:1-6). You will find that

sense of fulfillment you have sought for so long when God reveals to you a whole new set of priorities as your mind is renewed. As you deny yourself, take up your cross, and follow Jesus, the desires of your heart will change forever (Luke 9:23; Romans 12:1-2).

Obtaining this freedom is not dependent on what others may say or do. It is however, dependent on your own personal decision of faith to trust Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior. If you have not already done so, you can make a change in your life at this very moment that will literally last an eternity. You do not have to wait impatiently to receive it, but you can simply apply it to your life at this very moment. Believe on Jesus Christ who is Savior and Lord over all, and you will be saved (John 11:25; Romans 8:1; Acts 16:31). As your life begins to be occupied on Christ, you will begin to call on Him and confess Him as your Savior and Lord because He has saved you (1 John 4:13-15; 2 Corinthians 4:13). This is a

result of the new life from above and God's Spirit Whom you have received by grace through faith in Christ. Your actions and lifestyle will begin to reflect that Jesus is indeed Lord of your life. We can have God's free gift of grace no matter where we come from or what we have done. Forgiveness is available to us all. Therefore, the only way to fulfill that natural desire for absolution is through 100% surrender of yourself to a power outside yourself. That power is Jesus Christ our Lord. God has decided to forgive based on His perfect Son's perfect work. So

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take your eyes off of yourself and look to the Person and finished work of Christ for your relief. God will never leave you where He finds you, but in order for Him to increase, you must decrease. After all, He is Lord. He will surely complete the good work He has begun in you (Philippians 1:6).

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