

Published based on [Do You Need to Forgive Yourself?](#)

Do You Need to Forgive Yourself?



What is the stupidest thing you've ever done? What is the worst mistake you've ever made? What is the greatest harm you've ever committed to another human?

Do you have your list? Did the pictures in your mind come up faster than high-speed internet?

Most of us don't have any trouble recalling the worst moments of our lives. I imagine that when I asked those questions, you not only recalled the "bad" things you have done, but you also reconnected to some feelings of shame and guilt.

A foundational truth of Christianity is that we come into relationship with God through forgiveness based on the work of Christ. We maintain the flow of fellowship both with God and man by confessing our sins and appropriating the purifying work of Christ into our daily lives.

While we may understand the role of forgiveness in our Christian walk in relation to God and to others, we may find it harder still to be aware of the need to forgive ourselves.

Woven into the fabric of our core belief system may be the unspoken, and often unrecognized, belief that refusing to forgive ourselves shows God that we realize what dirty rotten sinners we really are and agrees with God that we don't deserve to be forgiven.

And while we are sinners and don't deserve forgiveness apart from Christ, through Christ we become righteous and through his grace, we are offered forgiveness. Living in that forgiveness means that we acknowledge that God offers us radical, undeserved forgiveness and we cannot make ourselves more deserving of that forgiveness by holding ourselves prisoner to past mistakes.

What are the practical implications in our lives when we have not forgiven ourselves for things for which God has forgiven us?

- The flow of grace in our hearts is blocked because we are, in essence, saying that our standard is higher than God's. The unspoken, unconscious belief is that, "Yes, God has forgiven me, but that is not sufficient to pay for my sin. I must cling to my 'guilty' verdict to prove that I know I don't deserve His forgiveness." There is a false pride which basically exalts our standard for forgiveness over God's standard. It suggests that while God says that Christ's sacrifice is sufficient for my forgiveness with Him, it is not sufficient for me to forgive myself which basically exalts our own over Christ.
- Refusing to forgive ourselves keeps us 'stuck', joined to the painful event in a way that doesn't allow us to move forward in our lives.
- Refusing to forgive ourselves hinders our ability to receive God's mercy and grace.
- Mires us in self-condemnation, self-hate, self-rejection, shame and false-guilt.
- Leads us to believe, at a core level, that God really doesn't forgive us either.
- Promotes a wrong view of God as being unreachable, unconcerned or powerless to help.

- Promotes a wrong view of God as One who desires to condemn and punish us.
- Leads us to 'give up' in our relationship with God.
- Exalts our penance over Christ's redemption.

So what is the most stupid thing you've ever done? The most harmful? The absolute worst mistake?

As you picture "it" and feel "it", will you explore whether or not you've truly released yourself from "it"?

If you've asked for God's forgiveness through His son Jesus Christ, and made things right with others when needed, forgive yourself. Step into God's grace and live in His freedom. Experiencing the full reality of His forgiveness comes when we extend that forgiveness to our own hearts.

You can also find this article published on [Do You Need to Forgive Yourself?](#), and on the tag pages [condemnation](#), [forgive](#), [forgiveness](#), [forgiving yourself](#), [Freedom](#), [Grace](#), [guilt](#), [redemption](#), [self-hatred](#), [shame](#).