

Road to Emmaus

Biblical Counseling Center

Understanding Guilt Biblically –

Mitch Lamotte

November 2019

Introduction: Defining/Understanding Guilt Biblically

I. We're all guilty

1 Corinthians 6: ⁹ Or do you not know that wrongdoers will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor men who have sex with men ¹⁰ nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. ¹¹ And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

A. What is guilt? - Guilt is a legal term that implies responsibility whether in a human court or divine.

James 4: ¹² There is only one lawgiver and judge, he who is able to save and to destroy.

Notes:

B. We're all _____ – For all have sinned and fall short (Ro.3:23)

By choice we have all willfully done things that make us guilty before a Holy God.

Psalm 32: ¹ Blessed is the one whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. ² Blessed is the one whose sin the LORD does not count against them and in whose spirit is no deceit. ³ When I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long. ⁴ For day and night your hand was heavy on me; my strength was sapped as in the heat of summer. ⁵ Then I acknowledged my sin to you and did not cover up my iniquity. I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD." And you forgave the guilt of my sin.

II. Wrong ways to Deal with Guilt

A. Ways people deny they are really guilty –

1. Excuse/Justify it –

2. Normalize it –

3. Minimize it –

4. Shift/Blame/Victim –

5. Desensitize it –

6. Medicate it –

B. Try to be a better person –

C. Compare yourself to others –

D. Become obsessed with your guilt –

1 John 1: ⁹ If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

James 5: ¹⁶ Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.

Notes:

III. What are the signs of unresolved guilt? (Ps. 38:1-18)

(v.2) - Internal pain & Spiritual pressure (v.8) – Loss of caring & Inward agitation

(v.3) - Physical illness (v.10) - Heart palpitations & Sad eyes

(v.4) - Heavy burdens (v.11) - Aloneness

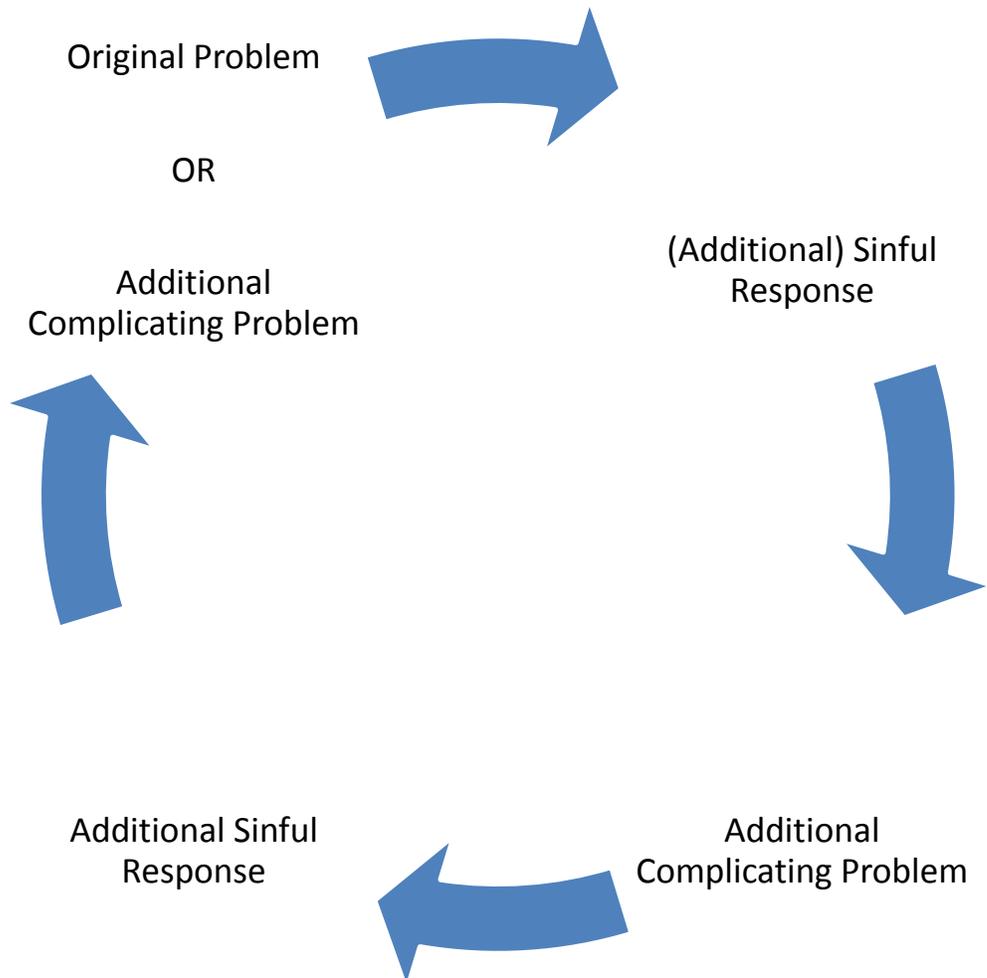
(v.5) - Worsening circumstances (v.12) - Threats

(v.6) - Daily sadness (v.17) - Sorrow

(v.7) – Weakness (v.18) – Anxiety

Psalm 38: ¹ LORD, do not rebuke me in your anger or discipline me in your wrath. ² **Your arrows have pierced** me, and your hand has come down on me. ³ Because of your wrath there is **no health in my body**; there is no soundness in my bones because of my sin. ⁴ **My guilt has overwhelmed me** like a burden too heavy to bear. ⁵ **My wounds fester** and are loathsome because of my sinful folly. ⁶ I am bowed down and **brought very low**; all day long I go about mourning. ⁷ My back is **filled with searing pain**; there is no health in my body. ⁸ **I am feeble** and utterly crushed; I groan in anguish of heart. ⁹ All my longings lie open before you, Lord; my sighing is not hidden from you. ¹⁰ My heart pounds, **my strength fails me**; even the light has gone from my eyes. ¹¹ My friends and companions **avoid me** because of my wounds; my neighbors stay far away. ¹² Those who **want to kill me** set their traps, those who would harm me talk of my ruin; all day long they scheme and lie. ¹³ I am like the deaf, who cannot hear, like the mute, who cannot speak; ¹⁴ I have become like one who does not hear, whose mouth can offer no reply. ¹⁵ LORD, I wait for you; you will answer, Lord my God. ¹⁶ For I said, “Do not let them gloat or exalt themselves over me when my feet slip.” ¹⁷ For **I am about to fall**, and my pain is ever with me. ¹⁸ I confess my iniquity; **I am troubled** by my sin.

Lost hope leads to the pit of depression Psalm 7: ¹⁵ *Whoever digs a hole and scoops it out falls into the pit they have made.* (see depression diagram below)



IV. The Only Right Way to Deal with Guilt

A. Admit your sin and guilt. (1 John 1:5-8; Proverbs 28:13a)

B. Confess to God and seek forgiveness.

1. To confess means we agree with God about our sin.

2. David's example of confession in Psalm 51

Psalm 51: ¹Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love; according to your great compassion blot out my transgressions. ²Wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin. ³For I know my transgressions, and my sin is always before me. ⁴Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight; so you are right in your verdict and justified when you judge.

3. For the unsaved this leads to judicial forgiveness. (Romans 10:3-10)

4. For those saved by faith this leads to parental forgiveness. (1 John 1:9-2:2)

C. Confess to the right/appropriate person. (Matt 5:23-24; James 5:16)

1. Help your counselee determine to whom they should confess

2. Consider the right restitution

(Luke 15:11-32; 19:8; Ex. 22:1-15; Prov. 6:30-31)

V. Worldly sorrow vs. Godly sorrow - 2 Cor. 7:1-12

Repentance – 2 Cor. 7:10-11

Knowing the difference of conviction & condemnation

Repentance – One of the most misunderstood words in the Bible.

1. What does it mean to repent?

A. A change of thinking (Ro. 6:11; Col. 3:1-3; 2Cor. 10:5) that leads to...

B. A change of behavior (Eph. 4:22-24; Col. 3; Ro. 6:19)

2. What are the fruits of repentance?

- A. Godly sorrow (2 Cor. 7:10)
- B. A focus on God and how sin offends Him (Ps. 32:5; 51:4)
- C. No regrets as our life choices change (Matt. 3:8; 2 Cor. 7:11)

3. Counterfeit repentance

- A. Sorry we got caught (Matt. 27:3)
- B. Sorry for what is lost (job, marriage) focus on self. (Matt. 27:3-5)
- C. Worldly sorrow (2 Cor. 7:10)

VI. Practical Strategies to help your counselee change

Isaiah 59: ² But your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden his face from you, so that he will not hear.

A. Learn How to handle Shame – Romans 5:6-10

⁶You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. ⁷Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous person, though for a good person someone might possibly dare to die. ⁸But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. ⁹Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him! ¹⁰For if, while we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life!

B. Go to the Bible for Guidance – Ephesians 4:17-20

4: ¹⁷ So I tell you this, and insist on it in the Lord, that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking. ¹⁸ They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts. ¹⁹ Having lost all sensitivity, they have given themselves over to sensuality so as to indulge in every kind of impurity, and they are full of greed. ²⁰ That, however, is not the way of life you learned

C. Keep on Asking for Forgiveness – Proverbs 28:13

28: ¹³ Whoever conceals their sins does not prosper, but the one who confesses and renounces them finds mercy.

D. Experience the Peace of God by Faith – Romans 5:1

5:1 “ Therefore , since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Conclusion:

Counselors should encourage counselees early in the counseling process to name sin for what it is rather than what our world says. We don't simply have a one night stand, an affair, we commit adultery. Here is what the apostle Paul says, ...”I also do my best to maintain always a blameless conscience both before God and before men.” (Acts 24:16)