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**Guilt:
True or
False?**

1201-B

Series: Starting Over

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INTO HIS LIKENESS RADIO

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Guilt: True or False?

What kind of world do you think this would be if whatever we did in life we only had one chance to do? Suppose, if as a child, you hadn't walked the first time you tried, so you were told you would never get another opportunity to try; you would be destined to crawl for the rest of your life. Or suppose you hadn't learned to write the first time you picked up a pencil, and because you failed, you were informed that you would never have another chance. (I guess some of us write like we never got another chance.) But can you imagine the state this world would be in?

The great composers would never have written music to stir the world simply because they hit a wrong note when they first began to practice. The football star who dropped a ball when he was four years old would never become a gridiron great. The artist who painted one bad picture would be banished from the canvas forever.

Of course, you say, that makes no sense at all. Life is not made up of instant successes, but of diligence, patience, and faithfulness. The artist who began with a picture that captured no one's fancy had to try again. The little boy who dropped the football kept trying until he learned to catch it. The musician kept practicing until he learned to do it right. Through getting up and starting over, each learned the secrets of a successful life.

They not only learned to perfect whatever they were trying to do, they learned as well that the character qualities that make man useful and create real success are born of failure. The seals of success are engraved upon lives who never stopped trying, who, no matter how poorly they may have fared, simply, quietly, got up and started all over again!

In the spiritual realm, this truth rings out with even greater clarity. The entire plan and program of God is predicated on the fact that man has failed, that "all have sinned and come short of the glory of God."¹ The Scripture goes so far as to say "There is none that doeth good, no not one."² The plan of God is not based on man's ability to succeed. The plan of God is called "redemption". It

¹ Romans 3:23

² Romans 3:12b

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is a plan designed to redeem something or someone who could not in and of themselves make it. The Bible calls it “grace”.

Even the believer is told again and again and again that he will not reach a stage on this earth where he will never fail again. “If we say that we have no sin”, John reminded us, “we deceive ourselves and the Truth is not in us; If we confess our sins He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us of all unrighteousness.”

The believer is told to come to the Father in the name of the Son and confess his or her violations against the Holiness of God; and God, who is rich in mercy, will without fail, forgive and say, “How would you like to start over?”

With that concept in mind, we began by asking ourselves that question: “How would you like to start over?” and by beginning to look at why God divided time the way He did, and how that division ought to help us know how and when to “start over”.

In Genesis, chapter one, we learned that God began His creative work by creating two dramatic portraits, the sun and the moon, and by giving them specified roles in the division of a new element called time. They were created for “signs, for seasons, for days, and for years.” And we learned that, in essence, each was a sentinel set at the doorpost of a segment of life to give man a reminder and an opportunity to start life all over again.

He gave us days to grant us believable chunks of time to trust Him, (we learned in Matthew 6) and to give us fresh new signals that His mercy was ours for the taking (as we learned in Lamentations 3).

He gave us years to put order in the larger scheme of things until time will be dissolved once again into eternity, and to stand as regularly divided intervals for the purpose of taking inventory of our life and worshipping God. There are other reasons, of course, but those are the ones we looked at in the last lesson.

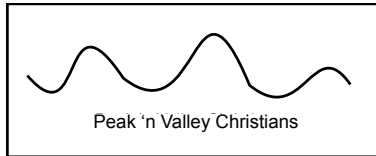
So God gave us time and the new year, in particular, to give us an opportunity to take a deep breath, take stock of who and what we are becoming, make the necessary corrections, and...start over.

I asked you in the last lesson to take this week just past and take inventory of your life, to call up from the computer of your heart a readout of those critical items that, when short-changed, tend to cause the whole life to be less effective. I gave you seven of them. In this lesson we will be looking at those seven check-points in detail.

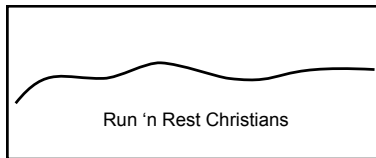
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The first step on our journey to new beginnings, however, included hooking up our spiritual pulses to one of God's Hope Scopes and seeing what kind of pattern our lives projected on the screen. We zeroed in on five particularly common patterns and asked ourselves, "Is that me?"

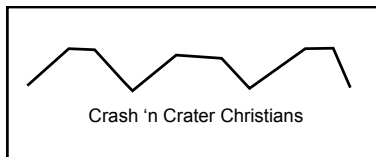
Those five were these:



1- The "Peak 'n Valley" Christian: the man or woman who rides the roller coaster of intense discipline followed by apathy until life ceases to progress at all, but simply like that roller coaster covers the same territory, again and again.

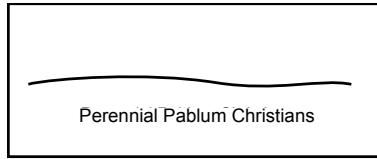


2- Then there were the "Run 'n Rest" Christians; those of us who grow in spurts, then stop under a spiritual shade tree and take a siesta until one of life's crises calls for a new beginning. "Run 'n Rest Christians" eventually grow, but waste time as though it were not a valuable commodity.

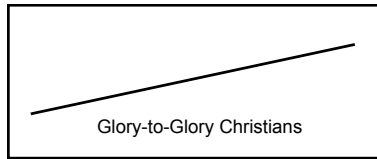


3- The third group were the "Crash 'n Crater" Christians; those of us whose highs and lows are dominated by our emotions or our feelings. A "good experience" leaves us exhilarated and spiritually motivated to change the world; but along comes a "bad experience" and the trap door of our emotions opens, and we fall like an elevator that's gone out of control. Crash 'n Crater Christians can take their temperature by life's circumstances, rather than by the consistency of the Word of God.

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4- There are the “Perennial Pablum” Christians; those who want Jesus for fire insurance, but don’t want the responsibility of being faithful or fruitful. They want to get in the door, fall on the floor, and say “Amen”.



5- But, alas, there are also the “Glory-to-Glory” Christians, those who make II Corinthians 3:18 their objective, to grow “in ever increasing splendor, from one degree of glory to another”, the men and women who make pleasing the heart of God their one primary aim in life and make life, by God’s grace, a series of wonderful new beginnings. With no wasted motion, they simply continue daily, weekly, monthly, and finally, yearly, to do whatever it takes to “start over.” That’s what you and I are called to be. Glory-to-Glory Christians, that’s what you and I are called to do. Take this wonderful amber warning light from the new year and use it as a signal from a loving God that’s it’s time to slow down, take stock, and start over.

In this study, we’re going to do just that. We’re going to begin looking at the areas of our lives that must be weighed at regular intervals to be sure they have not become contaminated by either unrecognized or unconfessed sin. We’re going to take inventory to see what might be missing from the shelves of our spiritual general store. We’ll ask where it went and learn how to balance the books and begin again. We’re going to see what we need to do to start over.

Item number one on our spiritual checklist is a most unusual commodity. You won’t find it in any store, but you will find it in many books, books telling you why not to have it, how to deal with it, and what caused it. The world has a zillion solutions to balancing the books where this item is concerned. God has one. And as always, His is the only one that works.

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So write down first on your inventory checklist: “Guilt: True or False”. You say, what is this, a quiz? No, there are two kinds of guilt, and that is exactly what causes the believer so much grief. There is true guilt, and there is false guilt, and we must learn to differentiate between the two! Neither should ever exist overnight. Neither should be kept in the storehouse of your heart for a prolonged period. They are perishable items, and they spoil; and when they spoil, they affect everything else they touch. It’s important that we take inventory of our guilt and deal with it decidedly.

God has clearly defined in Scripture what it is we have to be guilty of, who’s to blame, and what to do about it. Satan, on the other hand, has created a cleverly disguised counterfeit of the real thing. Then, by injecting the Christian with healthy doses of his guilt serum, he is able to literally incapacitate a believer for life, destroying the nervous system, causing paralysis of the spirit. And because it is so insidious, we must look at it carefully before we press on.

HOW NOT TO DEAL WITH GUILT

First, there is the real thing. Guilt. The dictionary defines guilt this way: the fact of being responsible for an offense or wrongdoing. I would underline that word “responsible” if I were you. You tell a lie. At first it may not bother you. Then the consequences of that lie begin to surface. You begin to feel guilty. This is a God-ordained consequence of sin. It is the conscience sending up signals that an offense has occurred, thus leaving a mark on the soul that must either be *erased* or *covered* over or *deadened* or *transferred*, so the conscience will be clear and life can go on.

Man’s solutions are several-fold. The first is to convince the soul by the argument of the mind that what was done was not wrong. Everybody lies, right? Even that pious Mary Smith who goes to church all the time tells her kids there’s no more cake, when there is. It’s all a matter of degree. This will work for a time. You can excuse guilt until you see the results of the sin, and then it begins to eat on you again.

The second thing man tries to do is to justify guilt. “Sure, I lied. Anyone would have lied under those circumstances. If I hadn’t lied, it’s no telling what might have happened.” So you change the severity of the sin by justifying the motivation.

Then, of course, there is the alleviation of guilt by deadening the

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senses. Alcohol, drugs, or other excesses that either fog the mind so it cannot remember or feel responsible, or so occupy the mind with satisfying the desires of self that it forgets, seem to deaden the effects of guilt; but when they wear off, the guilt is not only still there, it has been intensified. Thus, the result is often addiction, or as in the case of Judas, suicide. You cannot rid yourself of guilt by covering it over with a covering of more sin. Man has tried for centuries. Adam started it, and we've all followed suit.

Man's fourth trick is his favorite. He likes to *transfer guilt*. "Sure I lied. My mother was a liar. She taught me to lie. She's to blame." Or, "Sure I lied, I've always gotten a bad deal in life, and if I hadn't lied, no one else would have stood up for me." Unfortunately, even the professionals in our society, whose goal it is to genuinely help alleviate guilt, have seized on this solution as their number one answer to this nagging problem. Transfer the blame, until the guilt disappears. The trouble is, as we shall see later, when you transfer guilt, you merely translate guilt into bitterness. You don't remove it.

Adam and Eve in the garden were the first real recipients of unscriptural counselling. Satan invited them to lie on his couch, and he convinced Eve, in particular, that she was being forced to live in a restrictive environment, and she was the victim of an insensitive Father, who simply didn't want her to experience life's best. (Sound familiar?) So he quietly transferred the guilt (in advance) to God for having given them a "bad deal". He just doesn't want you to know what He knows, Satan goaded Eve, so He's limited your diet to prevent you from being free. Blame God, then do your thing.

Eve, of course, didn't have the courage to blame God in person (most of us don't), so she blamed Satan when God finally confronted her. She transferred the guilt. Adam, not one to be one-upped, caught on immediately to the charade, and he immediately transferred his guilt to Eve, then subtly, back to God Himself.

"The woman *You* gave me, *she* gave me the fruit." Trouble is, it didn't work. It didn't fool God, and it didn't satisfy Adam and Eve. Had they been satisfied, they wouldn't have gone into the fig leaf business, and they wouldn't have been looking for nooks and crannies in the garden to hide from the presence of God. The transfer of responsibility does not alleviate guilt. It didn't work for Adam and Eve, and it will not work for you.

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The only acceptable solution to real guilt is found in the Word of God. It's called R & S! R and S stands for *Responsibility and Substitution*. Responsibility says, "I did it. I was wrong. It's not my mother's fault; others had mothers who were far worse than mine and haven't done what I did. It's not society's fault. Everybody lives in society, and each person has to make his own choices." The natural result of blaming society is to justify *any crime* or *any abnormality* as though it were natural. "It's not God's fault; He has given me a free will and the right to choose good or evil. I chose to sin. I am responsible." Will you say that with me? It really feels good when you get down to it. "I am responsible," period.

You say, well, whoa, there. You've just compounded my guilt! If I'm totally responsible, how can I *not* be guilty? I'll tell you how! Because all you're doing by accepting the responsibility for your choices is getting the guilt out in the open where it can be removed.

God is not asking you to *carry guilt*; God is asking you to *acknowledge guilt*. He says if you "confess" your sins, that is if you acknowledge the responsibility for them, turning to God in repentance, "He is faithful and just to forgive your sins and to cleanse you of all unrighteousness." God says you cannot carry guilt! You don't have shoulders broad enough. God will carry your guilt. He will carry it away, never to be remembered anymore. You acknowledge it, and God will take it! But *until you acknowledge it*, Beloved, it's yours to deal with, either by excusing it, or justifying it, or deadening it, or transferring it. And none of those choices work, not one.

So there is such a thing as "real guilt". It may be defined as "conviction that is the result of unconfessed sin". Until you become a Christian, you have *all your guilt* to contend with. You cannot find an acceptable substitute, no matter how hard you try. Your good works won't tip the scales; your good intentions won't be enough; your good character won't do it. You have nothing to substitute that will work. So Jesus Christ came and offered Himself once and for all as the substitute for sin. He paid the cost to buy your guilt. Once you are willing to negotiate with Him on His terms, you can rid yourself of guilt once and for all.

You trade your sins for His righteousness. You offer Him your life in exchange for His. What a trade! That moment, when you ask Jesus Christ into your life, all you have to be guilty of is absorbed

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in an ocean of forgiveness. God can't remember it anymore. Yes, He is omniscient, but He has chosen to put those sins in a place where He will never recall them ever again. That's the solution to guilt. Responsibility and Substitution. You become responsible, then throw yourself on the mercy of God, and He will substitute HIS Holiness for YOUR Sinfulness and as of that moment, all guilt is gone. *That's why new Christians have such vibrancy, such freedom. The load is gone; the guilt is gone. Life is worth living again.*

But, of course, Satan can't stand that. So he goes to work trying to do one of three things.

a) He tries resurrecting old guilt using the same lie he fed Eve. "Did God say that?" "That's too easy" "Don't you believe it," or

b) He tries to get you to hold on to new guilt. He'll let you accept the responsibility and the freedom of your salvation, but those sins you've committed since you became a Christian, surely this "grace" stuff doesn't cover that, he'll say. Even though Jesus says every time you confess your sins God forgives you, Satan says that's too easy. Or:

c) He tries to confuse forgiveness with reaping. And here is where he does his best job.

Every Christian needs to understand this principle. Paul said in Ephesians 2,

For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God,

Not of works, lest anyone should boast.

(Ephesians 2:8,9 NKJV)

Its' free! God did it all. But in Romans, chapter 6, he reminds us,

What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?

Certainly not!

(Romans 6:1,2a NKJV)

Further, he states in Galatians 6,

Be not deceived; God is not mocked, for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.

For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the spirit shall of the spirit reap life everlasting.

(Galatians 6:7.8 NKJV)

How do we reconcile those three thoughts: free grace, disciplined choices, and sowing and reaping. It's really quite simple.

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Look at it this way: Here is a man who has committed a grievous crime. We'll pick something fierce, then you can apply it backwards to your own life, whatever your sins might be. Let's say he murdered someone. He is guilty as charged. He comes to God and says, "Lord, I have sinned against heaven and against man. I am not even worthy to be called your son. Please forgive me."

Now two completely different scenarios begin to unfold. One is in heaven. One is on earth. In heaven, God hears the prayer of that murderer, covers that sin of murder with the blood of Jesus Christ, and sends that sin away from Him as far away as the east is from the west. In God's sight, he is no longer a murderer. He is a forgiven sinner. Period. It is called grace. He does not deserve it, but that is not the issue. God's love is the issue, and God's love issues forth in grace, and that settles it. That sin is gone. The murderer has been restored in his relationship with God to the same position of sonship that existed before that crime took place. You say, "Well, God can't use a murderer." Not true. Moses was a murderer. Paul was a murderer. David was a murderer. God doesn't condone murder, but neither does God refuse murderers.

So in heaven the process that unfolds is called "restoration". On earth, meanwhile, another scene is taking place. That murderer is being tried in a court of law and sentenced either to life imprisonment or even the death penalty. He is ostracized by his peers, rejected by society, and may ultimately even lose his family and all his friends. You say, "I thought God forgave him?" He did. In heaven, the process is called "restoration". On earth, the process is called "sowing and reaping".

Moses was instantly forgiven for murder. But he had to reap a harvest of years of exile and the death of all his dreams. David was instantly forgiven of both adultery and murder (once he owned up to what he had done), but the results of both affected his children, his ministry, and his other relationships. It had to. Paul was forgiven for murdering thousands of Christians, but there were certain consequences in and out of the Church for the rest of his life.

Of course, God even uses the sowing and reaping for his Glory. The consequences of forgiven sin God translates into the "all things of life that work together for our good and for His glory" so God used those years in exile to make Moses a man to deliver His people. He used those consequences of David's sins and Paul's sins to shape their lives and shape their ministries. But that didn't

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totally alleviate the suffering they had to experience as a result of their sins.

Maybe you stole something from your employer. Then you came to God and asked forgiveness. In God's eyes you are no longer a thief. Like the thief on the cross, you are instantly forgiven. But also like the thief on the cross, the consequences go on. Your consequences may not be as severe as his, and I trust they won't. But you still may lose your job, suffer embarrassment, have to repay the stolen money, and you may *never* get another opportunity for a job with that kind of responsibility attached. But you don't have to go around with a long face and a sack full of guilt.

The reaping goes on, but the guilt ought to be gone. And here's where Satan comes in again. Every time you suffer from the *consequences* of your sin (reaping) he tries to resurrect the *issue* of your sin (guilt) and cause you to look at yourself as still guilty. That is called false guilt.

False guilt is the residue of bondage that remains in your spirit because you have not a) acknowledged the mercy of God, or b) accepted the forgiveness of God, or c) understood the nature of God.

Whereas real guilt is "unconfessed sin", false guilt then is "unclaimed grace".

Every time you listen to Satan and dredge up that old sin you are making a mockery of the cross, and *that act of refusing to accept God's mercy is now the sin.*

God says, "Stop it!"

You see, Satan uses an indelible blackboard, with an eraser that never quite removes all the chalk stains. Ah, but God has one of those "clean-o-slate" gadgets with a clear piece of plastic on the top, and no matter what you have written on it, when you peel it up, it erases everything, and you start all over again. Yes, you must live with the consequences of your sin. But, no, you must not live with the guilt of your sin.

And you prisoners who may be reading this who are locked behind bars for what you may have done, no matter the severity of the crime, must not be locked in the chains of guilt by refusing to accept the mercy of God. Your imprisonment is the reaping. But you are forgiven. In God's sight, you are not a murderer, or a rapist, or a thief, or an embezzler, you are a forgiven child of God, providing

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you have a) accepted Christ as your Savior, and b) confessed your sins, and asked forgiveness. Don't let the devil sell you his lies.

Do you see why Satan works so hard? First of all, if he can get a Christian to try to ignore real guilt and not confess it and forsake it, he has virtually rendered him useless in the Kingdom. But by the same token, if he can get a Christian to try to carry false guilt, he has just as effectively removed him from the mainstream of spiritual power. He has dismantled the launching pad that would send him skyrocketing into the spiritual universes to conquer new horizons.

Satan knows what false guilt can do. It leads to legalism (trying to work off the dirt or the weight of it). It leads to moral compromise (hearts that have not accepted mercy do not have the same motivation for holiness). It leads to depression, a state of self-pity followed by self-degradation. It leads to bondage and to fear, for the consequences of living in the presence of God unforgiven is more than man can bear, and it leads to hostility and bitterness, a desire to blame God and then strike back at God for allowing us to feel so dirty.

Forgiveness, on the other hand, produces the opposite of all of that. It produces joy (inner excitement over the nature of God). It produces love (man's response to the nature of God). It produces peace (personal confidence in the nature of God). It produces holiness (a constant desire to avoid violating the nature of God).

So we're beginning a new year and a new life. I'm going to ask us some questions then to help us take an adequate inventory of our guilt:

Question 1- Have you dealt with the basic issue of guilt in your life by asking Jesus Christ to come into your life and take away your sin and your guilt? Until you do, nothing else you will ever do can possibly free you from that incredible burden you are attempting to carry. You can excuse it, justify it, anesthetize it, or transfer it to someone else, but it will always come back to haunt you. There is only one cure for the sin question, and thus for the guilt question, and that is a Savior who will take upon Himself those sins and carry them away, freeing you to stand in the presence of a Holy God without spot or blemish. His name is Jesus. Ask Him to come into your life and watch that load of guilt vanish in an ocean of forgiveness and love. That is the only cure for a guilt-ridden life.

Question 2- If you are a Christian, are you willing to accept the

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responsibility for all of your sins? Are you willing to say to Christ today, “I did it,” “I said it,” “I thought it,” “I am responsible”? If not, real peace will never be yours. You will either become or remain bitter, hostile, and unforgiving. You will be destined to live (perhaps this whole year, and maybe your whole life) without tasting the sheer freedom that comes from acknowledging that you alone are responsible for your choices and the results of those choices.

Question 3- Having assumed responsibility for your own actions, are you willing to accept God’s mercy and let Him take the entire burden of that guilt upon Himself? He longs to; He asks to; He begs to.

You may need to write out on a piece of paper every sin or every mistake that continues to haunt you like a bad dream. Then take that piece of paper out into the back yard, or put it into the fireplace, and strike a match to it, and as it goes up into smoke, sing that old chorus out loud, “Gone, gone, gone, gone, yes, my sins are gone. Buried in the deepest sea, yes, that’s good enough for me. Praise God, my sins are G-o-n-e, Gone!”

Question 4- When Satan resurrects that guilt again, (and he will) are you willing to *immediately* (before he has a chance to do a number on you) quote I John 1:9 to him? He’ll flee from you! He can’t stand that passage.

Question 5- Are you willing to acknowledge that false guilt is sin? Every time you wallow in self-pity over something God has already thrown into His incinerator of eternity you are crucifying Christ anew. Are you willing to develop the habit of *confessing the guilt as sin*? That’s what it is.

Question 6- Are you willing to begin a study of the nature of God? The absence of the ability to accept forgiveness is a symptom of a life that does not understand the nature of God. God is mercy. God is grace. God is forgiveness. By His nature, He cannot hold against you that which has been confessed and forgiven. Study who God is. It’ll set you free.

Question 7- Ask yourself, “Do you understand the difference between what takes place in heaven and what takes place on earth when you confess your sins?” Do you grasp that the *results* of your sins do not mean God has not forgiven you. His forgiveness is immediate and final. The results (the sowing and reaping) may go on so long as this life goes on. They are not the same.

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It's inventory time and the item is guilt. Check yourself and take the appropriate steps to free yourself from the bondage of false guilt.

One last thing...

Read the Psalms of David. Here was a man who violated God's laws and abused God's office, but who, upon realizing the gravity of his sins, accepted full responsibility, then threw himself upon the mercy of God. Was he laden with false guilt? Not on your life! He accepted the consequences as necessary, but he accepted the mercy of God as immediate, and went about the business of starting his life all over again. Listen to Psalm 51. You might want to pray this prayer this morning with David:

Have mercy upon me, O God, According to Your lovingkindness;
According to the multitude of Your tender mercies, Blot out
my transgressions.

Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, And cleanse me from
my sin.

For I acknowledge my transgressions, And my sin is always
before me.

Against You, You only, have I sinned, And done this evil in
Your sight—That You may be found just when You speak, And
blameless when You judge.

Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, And in sin my mother
conceived me.

Behold, You desire truth in the inward parts, And in the
hidden part You will make me to know wisdom.

Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; Wash me, and I
shall be whiter than snow.

Make me to hear joy and gladness, That the bones You have
broken may rejoice.

Hide Your face from my sins, And blot out all my iniquities.

Create in me a clean heart, O God, And renew a steadfast
spirit within me.

Do not cast me away from Your presence, And do not take
Your Holy Spirit from me.

Restore to me the joy of Your salvation, And uphold me by
Your generous Spirit.

Then I will teach transgressors Your ways, And sinners shall
be converted to You.

(Psalm 51:1-13 NKJV)

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Oh, Beloved, do you see the pattern?

In verse one, David acknowledges the character of God. In verses 2-3, he takes the responsibility for his own sins. In verse 4, he acknowledges that all sin is, in essence, a sin against God; in verses 5-6, he acknowledges the basic sin nature and the redemptive plan of God. In verses 7-8 he asks God to cleanse him, carry away his guilt, and restore to him the joy of his salvation. In verse 9 he asks God to put away the very remembrance of those sins, and in verses 10-13, he assumes God will not only restore him to fellowship, but restore his ministry as well.

Did God do that? Of course he did.

Did David remember that? Of course he did.

Look at Psalm 103

Bless the LORD, O my soul; And all that is within me, bless His holy name!

Bless the LORD, O my soul, And forget not all His benefits:
(Psalm 103:1,2 NKJV)

Then David lists some of those benefits: He forgives, He heals, He redeems.

Who satisfies your mouth with good things, So that your youth is renewed like the eagle's. (Psalm 103:5 NKJV)

David had gotten a glimpse of a God who forgives: Listen to his response:

The LORD is merciful and gracious, Slow to anger, and abounding in mercy.

He will not always strive with us, Nor will He keep His anger forever.

He has not dealt with us according to our sins, Nor punished us according to our iniquities.

For as the heavens are high above the earth, So great is His mercy toward those who fear Him;

As far as the east is from the west, So far has He removed our transgressions from us. (Psalm 103:8-12 NKJV)

David was a forgiven man. He knew a God of mercy. A God who does not hold grudges, nor unleash his anger without end. A God who does not deal with us as we deserve, but rather has mercy so infinite, it can only be compared to the height of heaven when compared to earth. A God who not only forgives, but who also

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forgets. A God who takes our sins, and when we confess them, casts them to the winds to disappear forever.

David was a forgiven man.

Are you?

Have you allowed those streams of mercy that flow from the throne of God to sweep into the recesses of your life and cleanse you of your sins? And have you then accepted that cleansing for what it is? Final and complete. Or are you still bound by the shackles of guilt—guilt for sins long-since forgiven? Sins long-since cast by a loving God into the depths of the sea, never to be remembered anymore. The consequences of those sins may well go on, but the *guilt* for those sins need not, no must not, be carried into a new year. If the plague of guilt is still haunting you, I ask you now,

“How would you like to start over?” Our little poem picks up another stanza as we conclude:

HOW WOULD YOU LIKE TO START OVER? (Stanza 3)

How would you like to start over
Without all that guilt in your heart?
How would you like the burden gone
And in Christ have a brand new start?

How would you like to be able to say
“That guilt that’s been swallowing me,”
God has cast behind his back, and it
Never again can be?

How would you like to never again
Be haunted by guilt’s dread song,
To never again carry those sins
That to God have been gone all along?

You say you would? Of course you would!
Why more by guilt be driven?
Just stop right now, and shout it out
Praise God! I’ve been...forgiven!

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