

YOU'RE NOT THE BOSS OF ME

Guilt

Early on, most of us learn to monitor our behavior– to restrain our actions in order to maintain good-standing with those around us. But it is possible to modify our visible behavior while still harboring a heart controlled by toxic emotions like guilt. Jesus said human beings are not tainted by external factors, but by the toxic internal emotions that cause us to dishonor God and others. If this is true, it's not enough to modify our behavior. We've got to go a step further and examine the condition of our hearts before we can say no to the toxic emotions that compete for control of our lives.

Start Talking

What are your pop culture “guilty pleasures:” those shows, movies, or artists who are relentlessly mocked, but you can't help loving?

Looking Back

1. When it came to preemptively preparing to tackle the toxic emotions that fight for control of your life, how did you fare this past week?
2. Which emotions tried to steal the drivers' seat? How did you deal with them?
3. Did you experience any struggles prioritizing man-made rules over the love and grace of God?

What About You?

1. When you catch yourself doing or saying something, “out of character,” how do you tend to rationalize it away? What explanations do you offer for yourself? How about when other people do something, “out of character?”
2. Andy observed that we often think of guilt as creating a “debt/debtor” relationship. Have you ever experienced this? When?
3. How has the debt/debtor relationship that guilt creates affected your relationships?



4. What does it feel like to be on the other side of a relationship with somebody who tries to minimize their guilt when they're legitimately in the wrong? What about somebody who maximizes their guilt?
5. Have you ever found guilt leading to anger in your own life?

Look It Up

Read the Following Passage: Matthew 15:17-20, Proverbs 4:23, Romans 8: 2-8

6. Why is it important to acknowledge that human beings are not "contaminated" by outside influences, but by our own hearts?
7. What is the purpose of laws? As strange as it sounds, why do they exist?
8. Paul argues that the law is capable of condemning, but less effective when it comes to wiping out guilt, pointing out that God sent Jesus as a "sin offering" for this purpose. What is your understanding of this phrase?
9. If Jesus has functioned as a "sin offering," wiping out our debts, what implications should this have for our daily lives?

Putting It All Together

10. Think about your relationship with guilt. Do you tend to wallow in it or deny it, to minimize or maximize it?
11. Why do you think you do that? (Ex: Is there something in us that feels that by maximizing guilt and feeling bad, we can make up for our problematic actions? Does it feel like by minimizing it, we can outrun the consequences?)
12. How would your life change if you were able to truly confront the sacrifice of Jesus and realize that because you were bought with a price, you are "not yours to condemn?"
13. In what ways do you see guilt expressing itself in your relationships?
14. How does it make you feel to know you are guilty, but not condemned?
15. Where can you take the initiative to begin the healing process in a relationship? Who in your life may feel that it is up to you to start the process of redemption? Who might be waiting on you to make the first move?

