

“How Do I Get Over False Guilt About Watching Profanity on TV?”

I had/have a conviction to not listen to TV profanity. So I bought a TV Guardian (a device which blocks out all of TV profanity). I was so happy, problem solved. However, I still sense a somewhat deep sense of guilt. I believe I am struggling with false guilt, because I am feeling guilty for doing something (using a TV Guardian) which I know to be godly and just. Is this a fair assessment? If so, how do I cure false guilt?

I applaud your desire not to expose yourself to profane language. That's commendable. Further, you took steps to ensure. That desire is for holiness and let me affirm that.

The fact that you feel guilty about it is difficult for me to assess without knowing precisely what it is you feel guilty about, or why. Answering these questions will help you determine whether your guilt is in fact false guilt, as you put it, or just good old fashioned conviction from the Holy Spirit.

Probe's president Kerby Anderson wrote an article on [False Guilt](#) which explores these very issues and can help you answer just such questions. Check it out. I pray it will bless you. I hope this is helpful ☐

Praying for you,

Paul Rutherford

Thank you. Somebody else pointed out to me that maybe the problem is that I am remembering a little of the profanity. You see, I used to watch some of the same shows with no

filter. God convicted me so I bought a TV Guardian. However, since I had already watched the shows without the Guardian I can still remember some of the curse words. What should I do?

Hi _____,

Allow me to “jump in” here and try to help you a bit. I think Paul did a good job of counseling you.

After reading your follow up to his response, I sense an uneasy pattern may be at work in you: a need to perform holiness for God and not mess up. This could be the root of the problem you are having—not understanding very fully the [grace](#) God offers.

Rather than focus on the curse words that you recall (or that fact that you recall them, which is no surprise, since God’s forgiveness does not mean He gives us a lobotomy), it would be more fruitful to concentrate on the enabling of God’s Holy Spirit for any believer to experience and live out holiness in our lives. It’s a subtle shift to talk about, but profoundly different in effect.

How might this look in your situation? Try applying some biblical principles to your thinking:

- *Make your mind up to fill it (your mind) with Scripture—the holy words of life. Read Scripture daily like your life depends on it (your spiritual life and health DO depend on it), but it’s not to get favor with God. That’s already yours if you put your faith in Him—Jesus took care of our relationship with His Father.*

- *John 15:3-5 says, “Already you are clean because of the word that I have spoken to you. Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in*

him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing." So, if you have believed in Jesus to forgive your sin and keep you from everlasting punishment that we all deserve, you are clean. He said so. Act like you believe it and move on.

- Abide in Christ (live, breathe, think about, aim your life at and depend on Him for everything). This doesn't mean you lay down and expect Him to do your living out of faith for you, but it means you have no confidence in yourself to either care about sin or defeat it. It's He who works in you to make you holy. (Notice those two verses linked to above are back-to-back in the same thought. You cooperate with God's work in your life by letting Him work and doing your part.) Your job is to let him, to yield, to put to death (stop feeding) the flesh. Getting TV Guardian seems like a great step—but it's Christ who has to work out the memories, etc. for believers.

- Speaking of memories of images (sexual or otherwise), curses / cuss words, violence, ungodly things, here is something that is effective for me: give them to God to bury them, to take them off your mental screen or from your mental "hearing." I base this on the verse: "We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ" (2 Corinthians 10:5). This applies a general principle to our own rebellious, fleshly thoughts that have gotten corrupted by things like bad language.

- Most of all, don't worry about it. "Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done." (Philippians 4:6, NLT)

You seem to be obsessed with “doing it right” and “not messing up” (as I would put it). This is not trust, so it’s not God-centered or God-honoring—and it won’t work. Ephesians 1 says, “It was for freedom that Christ set you free.” You neither have to live in bondage to sin (like cursing) OR to having to keep the Law (keeping from cursing or thinking about those words). You’re free to rise above all of that by living a genuinely Spirit-led holy life—believe it and learn to live it. It takes practice and you *will* fail! Go back to God, ask forgiveness for this particular failure (you’ve already been saved from the penalty of sin if you believe Him for that) and start all over.

Ultimately, if you cannot get past this any other way, are you willing to give up the movies—even if your TV Guardian goes unused and you miss those fave movies? Giving them up could, for you, be part of putting the deeds of the flesh to death and picking up your cross to follow Him (“Then, calling the crowd to join His disciples, He said, ‘If any of you wants to be My follower, you must turn from your selfish ways, take up your cross, and follow Me.’” —Mark 8:34)

Believe me as one who’s been asked to give up various things enough times in my 35 years of walking with Christ, when the Lord leads you to give something up, it’s well worth it.

I hope this provides some guidance. It goes deep. Read it and the Scripture passages many times, praying that the Lord will make things clear to you and apply them with others holding you accountable—share with mature Christians, your pastor, etc.

Praying with Paul for you, _____. Thanks for writing.

Byron Barlowe

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Frasier Worldview Check

I got hoodwinked tonight.

I was watching re-runs of the old NBC television show Frasier—based on the minor character from *Cheers*, Frasier Crane—when I found myself agreeing with Frasier’s words describing Judaism. It wasn’t until later that night, as I passed those words through my worldview filter, that I came to realize something was wrong about Frasier’s comments. Frasier (at least the writers) was not giving Judaism a fair shake.

In the episode, Frasier’s son Freddy is celebrating his thirteenth birthday. Freddy’s mother is Jewish, which makes Freddy Jewish as well. The thirteenth birthday is a special one for Jewish children; it is the point in their lives when they become adults. To commemorate their passage into adulthood, a celebration is in order: a *bar-mitzvah*.

Frasier’s friend Roz knows that he is not Jewish, and asks him what that’s like for him. His response is what hoodwinked me:

Roz: Is it weird to have a son brought up in a different religion from yours?

Frasier: Not at all, Roz. It’s a faith that espouses love, compassion, duty, education, and art. All values which I cherish.

What tricked me was not what Frasier said but what he didn’t say. Jewish culture definitely espouses love, compassion, duty, education, and art. I completely agree. Several friends who have helped me through dark times in my life have been Jewish. I feel a special affinity for the Jews as a Christian because I read the Hebrew Bible as a part of my own Christian

Bible— essentially the first five books (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy).

But Frasier made no mention of the Hebrew God, who is the central figure of their faith. He is their Creator, Sustainer, Protector, and Savior. The Hebrew Bible is the story of this God and his special, chosen people. How then could Frasier have completely ignored Him?

To be fair, Frasier was merely speaking about the points of Judaism with which he agrees. We all understand that intuitively as soon as we read the dialogue. However, if these aspects of love, compassion, duty, education, and art are the only elements of Judaism that resonate with him, then I suspect he does not truly identify with the heart of the Hebrew faith because he has not mentioned anything about their God.

Granted, this represents one comment in one episode. However, there may be something else going on beneath Frasier's words. When asked about the apparent conflict between Frasier's religious beliefs and his son's, in some sense he responds by saying that they are not so different. But he only says they are not so different in those five specific aspects: love, compassion, duty, education, and art. If he's saying that's all there is to Judaism, then I would have to disagree.

Philosophers have a fancy name for what Frasier did: *reductionism*. He has reduced Judaism down to smaller constituent parts which, when reassembled, do not recreate the whole. It seems unfair to equate Judaism solely with these five aspects because many other causes, beliefs, or even organizations can be characterized as espousing precisely the same principles, but not be Jewish in the least.

For example, Ancient Greece had a culture that espoused all such principles, yet it had no particular religious affiliation at all. Culturally we could also consider Italy

during the Renaissance, or even the Chinese under the Tang dynasty.

Yet, cultures like these that valued love, compassion, duty, education, and art are in other ways very dissimilar to Judaism. Similarities do not equate to identity. That is, just because a religion or culture shares certain attributes does not mean that they are the same in essence. However, *reductionism* falsely makes them seem equivalent just because they share some traits.

So there must be more to Judaism than just these five aspects mentioned by Frasier.

Frasier's religious synopsis may not seem like a very big deal because it is, after all, only one statement. But this one sentence is not what bothers me. I run across people making claims like these all the time in conversation, in magazines, news, practically everywhere. It's sloppy thinking, really. I just want to encourage us not to slip into *reductionism* ourselves—and further, to be even more careful about what we take in, keeping that worldview filter on at all times.

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