

“Will God Punish Me Forever for My Mistakes?”

I am so depressed right now because I feel all the mistakes in my past mistakes are so many that I won't have a good future.

I'm 29 years old and I had 2 abortions before I was 20. Two years ago I slept with my boyfriend even though I was already a Christian; we went our separate ways because of this. (He's also a Christian.) I have been single ever since and I have been told that I am being punished for all my sins. Does this mean because of what happened in my past I will never find peace, joy or fulfillment? Does this mean God will never trust me with a relationship again? Will I have to pay for the rest of my life?

Will He refuse to forgive me since I made the mistakes when I was already a Christian? I have been so tormented by all this and I am in constant pain—my heart aches. I really don't know what to do, I have prayed and asked for forgiveness, don't know what else to do. All I feel is guilt, guilt, guilt.

Oh, you precious girl! I have such wonderful news for you!! Your flesh and Satan have been doing a number on you, pouring guilt and self-condemnation onto you all this time . . .when God has been standing there, extending grace and mercy and complete forgiveness to you, wanting you to receive it, but you haven't been able to see it.

How do I know this?

Because of “the Christian's bar of soap,” 1 John 1:9—“If we confess our sins [and you have, over and over and over, right?], He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us of all unrighteousness.” Note that God does two things when we confess: 1) He forgives us, which means He sends them away forever, and 2) He cleanses us of ALL

unrighteousness, making our souls clean and pure as snow. What's missing for you is the decision to consciously RECEIVE His forgiveness and cleansing.

Are you being punished for your sins? Well, consider this: there is a difference between punishment, which includes wrath being poured out on us, and the consequences of our choices, which is loving discipline. Romans 8:1 says that there is NO condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because the Lord Jesus took all of the Father's condemnation on Himself on the cross. So God is not punishing you. Are you experiencing consequences for your sinful choices? Maybe in the beginning. But from what you describe to me, with peace, joy, and fulfillment eluding you, it sounds like you have your cup upside down, which is preventing you from receiving any new blessings from God because of the mistaken belief that you are still under condemnation.

No, beloved sister, you will not have to pay for the rest of your life. What God wants is repentance, and you have already done that. Scripture says that godly sorrow leads to repentance (2 Cor. 7:10), but there is a worldly sorrow, fed by our own flesh or by demonic forces in temptation, that leads to death. And that's where you've been living, hasn't it? Camped out in a living death?

I would love to lead you in a prayer to receive God's forgiveness and cleansing. May I also suggest that you do something physical to make it more real: lift up your arms, palms up, like a small child ready to be picked up by her daddy: *Dear Father, I want to turn my cup right-side up and receive all the forgiveness and cleansing You have for me. I make a choice today to open my heart to You and let You love me, let You forgive me, let You cleanse me from all unrighteousness. Thank You for exchanging my sin for Jesus' righteousness. Thank You that Your word is true, that because I have confessed my sins, You are faithful and just to forgive me of my sins and cleanse me of all unrighteousness. I receive it in*

Jesus' name.

From here on out, every time the old feelings of condemnation and guilt pop up (and they will, because they have become a habit), go back to the Father and thank Him again for forgiving you and cleansing you, and tell Him, "I do not accept those false feelings of condemnation and guilt, but I do receive Your grace, and thank You for loving me, Abba!" It may take awhile for your feelings to catch up with the truth of your decision to receive God's grace, but that's OK. They will. Feelings follow beliefs and actions like a caboose follows the engine of a train.

The Lord bless you this day, _____, and I pray that you will hear the love in your Father's voice and see the love in His eyes as you receive His truth through this email!

Warmly,

Sue Bohlin
Probe Ministries

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