Freedom from Regret, Guilt and Shame

Regret, Guilt and Shame can feel like heavy, inescapable chains, but God's word offers a powerful path to true freedom and restoration. This collection of Bible verses highlights the depth of His grace, reminding us that our past mistakes do not define our future. Dive into these truths to silence the voice of condemnation and embrace the unconditional love, forgiveness, and peace found in Christ.

Romans 3:23-24 *"For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God's glorious standard. Yet God, in his grace, freely makes us right in his sight. He did this through Christ Jesus when he freed us from the penalty for our sins."* Paul reminds us of the important fact that no human is perfect. God does not expect perfection. But when we do fail and acknowledge this to him with the desire to do better, he is quick to forgive.

Matthew 6:9-14 *9 "Your Father knows exactly what you need even before you ask him! 9 Pray like this:*
Our Father in heaven, may your name be kept holy.
10 May your Kingdom come soon.
May your will be done on earth, as it is in heaven.
11 Give us today the food we need,
12 and forgive us our sins, as we have forgiven those who sin against us.
13 And don't let us yield to temptation, but rescue us from the evil one.

14 "If you forgive those who sin against you, your heavenly Father will forgive you. 15 But if you refuse to forgive others, your Father will not forgive your sins."

The Lord's Prayer is a foundational model for prayer taught by Jesus that centers on building a relationship with a loving "Father," asking for daily provision and forgiveness. This prayer reminds us that God's mercy is a daily, unearned gift meant to be received rather than a standard of perfection.

Psalm 32:5 *"I acknowledged my sin to you, and I did not cover my iniquity; I said, 'I will confess my transgressions to the Lord,' and you forgave the iniquity of my sin."*

Psalm 103:10-12 *"He does not punish us for all our sins; he does not deal harshly with us, as we deserve. For his unfailing love toward those who fear him is as great as the height of the heavens above the earth. He has removed our sins as far from us as the east is from the west."*

Joel 2:12 *"Don't tear your clothing in your grief, but tear your hearts instead. Return to the Lord your God, for he is merciful and compassionate, slow to get angry and filled with unfailing love. He is eager to relent and not punish."*

1 John 4:9-10 *"This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. 10 This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins."*

Psalm 51:1 *"Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love; according to your great compassion blot out my transgressions."*

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."*

Psalm 25:7 *"Do not remember the sins of my youth and my rebellious ways; according to your love remember me, for you, Lord, are good."*

Acts 2:38 *"And Peter said to them, 'Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."*

Acts 3:19 *"Repent therefore, and turn back, that your sins may be blotted out."*

Ephesians 1:4-8 *"Even before he made the world, God loved us and chose us in Christ to be holy and without fault in his eyes. [5] God decided in advance to adopt us into his own family by bringing us to himself through Jesus Christ. This is what he wanted to do, and it gave him great pleasure. [6] So we praise God for the glorious grace he has poured out on us who belong to his dear Son. [7] He is so rich in kindness and grace that he purchased our freedom with the blood of his Son and forgave our sins. [8] He has showered his kindness on us, along with all wisdom and understanding."*

Colossians 1:13–14 *"For he has rescued us from the kingdom of darkness and transferred us into the Kingdom of his dear Son, [14] who purchased our freedom and forgave our sins."*

Colossians 3:13 *"Bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive."* This includes forgiving yourself, so you don't block God's blessing of forgiveness that He wants to bestow on you.

1 John 2:1-2 *"My dear children, I am writing this to you so that you will not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate who pleads our case before the Father. He is Jesus Christ, the one who is truly righteous. [2] He himself is the sacrifice that atones for our sins—and not only our sins but the sins of all the world."*

Romans 8:1 *"Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus."*

Psalm 65:3 *"When we were overwhelmed by sins, you forgave our transgressions."*

Psalm 130:1-5 *"From the depths of despair, O Lord, I call for your help.*
[2] Hear my cry, O Lord. Pay attention to my prayer.
[3] Lord, if you kept a record of our sins, who, O Lord, could ever survive?
[4] But you offer forgiveness, that we might learn to fear you.
[5] I am counting on the Lord; yes, I am counting on him. I have put my hope in his word."

Psalm 86:5 *"For you, O Lord, are good and forgiving, abounding in steadfast love to all who call upon you."*

Luke 6:37 *"Judge not, and you will not be judged; condemn not, and you will not be condemned; forgive, and you will be forgiven."* This does not mean that people won't judge or condemn you; they will. But God promises He will not when we do not.

Ephesians 4:21-32 *"[21] Since you have heard about Jesus and have learned the truth that comes from him, [22] throw off your old sinful nature and your former way of life, which is corrupted by lust and deception. [23] Instead, let the Spirit renew your thoughts and attitudes. [24] Put on your new nature, created to be like God—truly righteous and holy. [25] So stop telling lies. Let us tell our neighbors the truth, for we are all parts of the same body. [26] And don't sin by letting anger control you. Don't let the sun go down while you are still angry, [27] for anger gives a foothold to the devil."*

Ephesians 4:28 "*If you are a thief, quit stealing. Instead, use your hands for good hard work, and then give generously to others in need. [29] Don't use foul or abusive language. Let everything you say be good and helpful, so that your words will be an encouragement to those who hear them. [30] And do not bring sorrow to God's Holy Spirit by the way you live. Remember, he has identified you as his own, guaranteeing that you will be saved on the day of redemption."*

Ephesians 4:31-32 *"Get rid of all bitterness, rage, anger, harsh words, and slander, as well as all types of evil behavior. Instead, be kind to each other, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God through Christ has forgiven you."*

Ezekiel 18:21-23: *"But if a wicked person turns away from all the sins they have committed and keeps all my decrees and does what is just and right, that person will surely live; they will not die. None of the offenses they have committed will be remembered against them. Because of the righteous things they have done, they will live. Do I take any pleasure in the death of the wicked? declares the Sovereign Lord. Rather, am I not pleased when they turn from their ways and live?*

10 "Rs" to Overcome Regret, Guilt and Shame

Are you riddled with regret, guilt and shame for choices you have made? Do you plague your mind with thoughts of "If only, " I shoulda..." "How could I be so foolish... so insensitive... so naive...?" The Bible reminds us that "all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." (Romans 3:23) Did you catch that? We ALL sin! The word "sin" literally means "to miss the mark"—failing to meet God's perfect standard of righteousness. There is no one who always acts, speaks, or reacts in holy ways.

The problem comes when we refuse to accept the forgiveness that God freely offers us, or when we try to carry the weight of our own guilt. It is a good thing to feel godly sorrow over our actions, as it leads us to repentance. However, hanging onto negative condemnation only keeps us trapped. That's when the enemy uses our past to breed guilt, shame, worthlessness, anxiety, and depression.

When you fully surrender your past to God, you can walk in freedom and bear *"the fruit of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control." (Galatians 5:22-23)*

Consider these biblical steps to lay down your burden and walk in freedom:

REFLECT on what you have to gain by continuing not to forgive yourself. What do you have to gain by forgiving yourself? Are you inflicting self-punishment? Do you gain unhealthy attention from others by holding on to past choices?

REDEFINE REGRET: Let your regret become godly sorrow—a healthy grief that drives you directly into the arms of Jesus, who removes your guilt completely.

REPENT: By taking your actions to Jesus honestly. *"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."* (1 John 1:9) He is the one who cleanses you; you do not have to fix yourself before coming to Him.

RESPONSIBILITY: Acknowledge what happened, but trust that Jesus paid your debt. True peace comes from knowing you are justified by faith, not by your own perfect track record.

REPAIR: Where possible, make things right. If your choices hurt others, extend a heartfelt, humble apology and seek biblical reconciliation.

RENEW your mind: Reject the lies of condemnation. When the enemy reminds you of your past, remind yourself of God's truth. Do not listen to demonic lies designed to keep you down, and do not live for the approval of others. Speak the truth of who you are in Christ.

REVIEW and RELY: Review the choices you made, not to beat yourself up, but to learn from them. Ask the Holy Spirit to give you discernment for the future. Instead of relying on your own strength or willpower to "do better next time," yield to the Holy Spirit daily so He can change your desires and reactions from the inside out.

READ AND REREAD GOD'S WORD: Spend time in the Gospels—Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. There you will learn who Jesus is, why He came to earth, and what He meant when He said, *"I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."* (John 14:6)

REMEMBER YOUR WORTH: God created you and loves you deeply. Etch these words on your heart: ***"****For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life."* (John 3:16)

REHEARSE: Rehearse your future choices in your mind, but do it through the lens of Scripture. Visualize how a child of God, filled with the Holy Spirit, should respond to tempting or stressful situations. Instead of just practicing human willpower, mentally practice yielding to God's peace, walking away from temptation, and responding with grace. Preparation in the mind leads to obedience in the moment.