**What Is Guilt** ~ The dictionary defines the word "guilt" as a "feeling of responsibility or remorse for some offense, crime, wrong, etc., whether real or imagined." Guilt is an inherent human trait that should be seen as a gift.

**There's two kinds of guilt in the Bible.** There's Godly sorrow that leads a person to repentance (2 Cor 7:10), which is know as *conviction* and it comes from the Holy Spirit (John 16:8, "when He comes, He will convict the world concerning sin..." - NASB). Once a person repents, the guilt lifts and they feel relieved and joyful that their sin(s) have been forgiven. Then there's another kind of guilt, and that's *condemnation* or accusations from the devil (Rev.12:10). Satan loves to torment God's people by reminding them of their pasts, and continually holding their sins before them even after their sins have been forgiven. This is condemnation and there is no good that comes out of it whatsoever. It tears us down, makes us feel dirty, unworthy and robs of us of our faith and confidence in Christ Jesus. It's a lie from the father of lies, and it needs to be ignored (Romans 8:1-4).

**Know the difference between guilt and guilty feelings.** There is a distinction between guilt and guilt feelings. One can be guilty of some misdeed or mistake and feel no guilt or not even recognize having done something wrong. On the other hand one can feel guilty about something that was not wrong, but believes was wrong. Both conditions show why conscience alone, even a sensitive conscience, should not be our only guide to the moral life (Proverb 3:5-6). Self-inflicted guilt and guilt inflicted by others are forms of condemnation which is wroth by ignorance (2 Timothy 3:12-13).

**The stronghold of guilt.** When a person who has repented of their sin(s) but continually feels guilty day after day, even after being told that their past has been washed away and their sins have been forgiven, is facing a stronghold. A stronghold is a lie that is believed, which results in an incorrect thinking pattern. The stronghold of guilt is often not alone, it is usually accompanied with an incorrect perception of themselves or an incorrect perception of God (which are both strongholds in themselves). People who have a stronghold of guilt rarely see God for who He really is (including His awesome forgiving nature) or they don't see themselves correctly. They are new creations in Christ who's past has been washed away (2 Corinthians 5:17), but they simply don't believe it because they have a stronghold in their mind that needs to be torn down (2 Corinthians 10:5, Galatians 5:1).

**How to deal with guilt**

**Step 1:** Understand the nature of God's forgiveness towards you.

**Step 2:** Repent of your sin(s) if you haven't already done so. They big key to being forgiven is repentance.
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**Step 3**: Know that your past sins have been forgiven, and that you are now clean in Christ Jesus. Stop thinking about your past sins and start thinking about the new person you are in Christ. We are NEVER told to mull around our past sins, but rather to forget the things which are behind and press forward. (Phil 3:13)

**Step 4**: Forgive yourself! Jesus made it clear that we are to be forgiving, and that includes forgiving yourself. You need to release yourself from the bondage of unforgiveness. If God chose to forgive you, who are you to hang onto something that God chose to let go of? This is a major source of bondage, and I can't stress how vital it is for you to release yourself from your past. Colossians 3:13 tells us we ought be, "...forgiving one another..." If you look up the phrase 'one another' in that verse in the NT Greek, it translates to the word *Heautou* which includes THEMSELF! It is vital to be forgiving towards yourself!! Bitterness which is the fruit of unforgiveness, regardless who or what it's about, defiles a man (Hebrews 12:15).

**NOTES**

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