

# How to Forgive Yourself When You are Over Loaded with Shame and Guilt. Luke 15:11-24

Jimmy Doolittle Squadron -- a surprise raid on Tokyo from the carrier Hornet. On April 18, 1942, Jake DeShazer.

Mitsuo Fuchida

## **Luke 15:11-24**

*11 Jesus continued: "There was a man who had two sons. 12 The younger one said to his father, 'Father, give me my share of the estate.' So he divided his property between them.*

*13 "Not long after that, the younger son got together all he had, set off for a distant country and there squandered his wealth in wild living.*

*14 After he had spent everything, there was a severe famine in that whole country, and he began to be in need. 15 So he went and hired himself out to a citizen of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed pigs. 16 He longed to fill his stomach with the pods that the pigs were eating, but no one gave him anything.*

*17 "When he came to his senses, he said, 'How many of my father's hired men have food to spare, and here I am starving to death! 18 I will set out and go back to my father and say to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you.*

*19 I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired men.'*

## **I. Receiving Jesus Forgiveness**

**A. The story of the younger son, the prodigal son, is the story of you and me.**

1. The younger son wanted all that life had to offer now!

2. He didn't want to work for his inheritance or wait until his father died. He wanted it now.
  3. That is the lie of the devil and the lie of society.
  4. **It is the lie that says: "You don't have to struggle, you don't have to bear responsibility for your actions, you can have it all now"**
  5. Because we are a lazy and proud society we have offered every excuse under the sun to justify bad behavior.
  6. We have **changed our language to justify this bad behavior:**
    - bad behavior is self expression.**
    - adultery is a temporary meaningful relationship.**
    - lying is merely be disingenuous.**
- B. The problem is-that by the time we wake up, like the younger son in Jesus parable-the sin has taken root, the soul is rotting, and now we must carry the frustration, anger, and guilt.
1. Society offers nothing to deal with the real pain following sin.
    - a. Therefore people turn to alcohol, drugs, sex, affairs, etc.
    - b. Society is empty when it comes to solving shame, guilt and sin
  2. Jesus Christ does! He is the only one who does!!
  3. What does he offer?
    - LIFE-the power to forgive, the power to be forgiven, the power to forgive yourself.**
- C. The process by which that forgiveness takes root and hold in our lives varies with time for those who will accept it.
1. But the basic order in which it occurs is similar.

**2. First thing we need to do once we have admitted that we are overloaded with shame and guilt is to repent accepting Jesus' forgiveness.**

**What is repentance?**

**It is to agree with Jesus about our sins and to exchange our mind, our way of thinking, with Jesus' mind.**

3. I will not kid you: This is extremely tough!

- a. Most of us find it difficult to admit we are wrong and it is equally tough to accept the forgiveness of the Lord.
- b. Why? Because we live with an inner drive to make up for our mistakes, our sins, an inner drive to make it right by our own power.
- c. There is a little problem-no matter how hard we try-we cannot make up for the mistakes, the sins of the past.

Imagine we all line up on the west coast. A starters gun Goes off and we hit the water running.

**Our goal is to swim to Hawaii.** That is a 2074 nautical miles.

You're sincere. You're in shape. You're determined.

How far do you get before you drown?

Most of us less than a mile. Some five, some ten, the best may even go 100 miles.

Eventually all die.

Swimming to Hawaii non-stop is impossible.

- d. If the devil cannot convince you that you cannot make on your own then the devil is continually attempting to convince you that your sin went beyond the power, desire, or the will of Jesus to forgive you.
- e. You may hear that inner voice that says: **"Ha, you think God will forgive you for what you did? NO Way!! It's hopeless."**
- f. That is a lie!
- g. Think of the father in Jesus parable. Luke 15
  - 1. Jesus says that the Father saw his son a long way off, and was filled with compassion, ran to him, threw his arms around him, and kissed him.
  - 2. Here is the good news: Jesus was looking for you long before you came to realize that your sin was destructive.
  - 3. He was and is more than eager to forgive you and cleanse you and make you into a new person than you imagine.
  - 4. His invitation to you, right at this moment, is the invitation to accept the total and complete forgiveness he offers.
  - 5. When **Jesus Christ was nailed to the cross-your sins were nailed with him, include your greatest sin.**
  - 6. He shed his blood so that we might have relief, pardon, cleaning, healing of sin which the Bible calls forgiveness.
  - 7. He promises us in **I John 1:9** *"If we confess our sins he is faithful and just to forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness."*

8. Note the condition in this verse: **"If we confess"**
- a. If you have acknowledged before the Lord that your sin, attitude, behavior was and often is wrong, then....
  - b. He promises to totally, 100% forgive you forever.
  - c. Does the verse say that he will cleanse you from almost ALL unrighteousness except your sins? NO!
  - d. It says: **"All Unrighteousness"**
  - e. This includes you!!

**TRANSITION:** If you accepted the forgiveness of God, then you are ready for the next step, to forgive others.

## II. Forgiving Others

A. **Viktor E. Frankl**-was a World War II concentration camp survivor.

He wrote a best selling book: *A Man's Search for Meaning*.

He was thrown into a Gestapo prison in WWII.

1. Gestapo guard took the wedding ring off his hand. Frankl said: **"You can do this to me, but I get to decide how I feel about it."**

2. We chose how we feel about life and evil now that we are new people in Jesus Christ.

3. As believers in Jesus Christ we have the power to decide how we respond to the absurdities of life.

B. The power of love is the greatest power in the universe-the power to forgive others is the second greatest power of all.

C. The willingness to forgive is the power to choose how we feel about the absurdities of life.

D. There may be many people who have hurt you or abused you in life.

1. What happens if You do not forgive them?

2. You continue to be victimized!

3. How? You continue to live in anger, bitterness, resentment and guilt.  
**You are imprisoned.**

4. What happens if you forgive?

a. **Earl Palmer**-Presbyterian Pastor in Berkley California tells the story of pastoring a church in the Philippines for six years.

1. For several years their parking lot was stone and weeds.

2. Watch your step! There were always cobras crawling around.

3. Finally they raised the money and asphalted the lot.

4. He was very proud and would walk daily to the church building across that asphalt.

bulge  
5. One day-noticed a bulge in the asphalt. Eventually the  
broke open. What Earl discovered was a **mushroom!**

in his  
6. In his anger he plucked the mushroom and smashed it  
fingers.



7. The next day however he saw more bulges-more mushrooms.
8. As he stood looking at all the bulges with more mushrooms breaking through he thought, "How it is possible for a frail mushroom to push through three inches of solid asphalt?"
9. He no more than thought this then he had the answer. Asphalt is stagnant-the mushroom has life. Life made the difference.
10. Like that mushroom if you forgive-you get life! Life now and eternal life in Jesus Christ.
11. Forgiveness is extremely powerful and life giving.

## **The story of "Jimmy".**

A young couple dropped by the church one day out of the blue. They had never visited this church before but they wanted to talk to the pastor. He invited them into his office. They told him that their divorce was to be finalized in three days but they thought they would talk to one more person and see if there was anything to salvage from their 15 year marriage.

As they talked the pastor zeroed in on the hurt, the miscommunication, the mistakes. After nearly two hours he asked them to get on their knees, repent before the Lord and then ask one another for forgiveness. To his delight and surprise they got on their knees, cried out to the Lord and asked one another for forgiveness. They decided that they would not get a divorce.

The pastor remembered that they told him they had an eleven-year old son who stuttered and was in therapy. As they were leaving the pastor said, "be sure to tell your son you are staying together and that none of this was his fault." That is precisely what they did.

Two weeks later the pastor's wife, who is a speech therapist was talking with another speech therapist who told her of a miracle with one of

her patients. An eleven year old boy, who had been coming to her for therapy for the past 18 months suddenly stopped stuttering two week ago and has not stuttered since. When the pastor's wife asked the name of the young man it turned out to be the son of the couple on the verge of divorce. When the couple decided to forgive one another their son was also healed.

Just to assure you this is not one of those temporary psychosomatic healings that event took place 25 years ago. The couple have been in church ever since and their son still does not stutter to this day.

Forgiveness brings life to you and life to others!

How do you do it?

a. I many of you have heard: Forgive and forget?

What is the problem with that statement? That would require amnesia!

The power to let go of the past sin, even when we remember it, and have a new attitude of life toward others is what we want.

b. **KEY: The power to forgive always comes out of the power of being forgiven.**

c. *"We love because he first loved us."*

d. We can forgive because we have been forgiven.

e. Forgiveness is always done for Jesus sake!

f. How?

1. Forgiveness is a decision of the will and a process.

2. Choose to forgive for Jesus sake.

3. Regardless of how we feel emotionally we walk in forgiveness and we act in a forgiving manner toward that person.
4. Inwardly we continually renounce bitterness, anger, revenge.



5. We speak words of forgiveness. **We see Jesus standing between us and that person who has sinned against us.**

6. Jesus says: *"For my sake forgive this person."*

7. The more you do it the more it becomes you.

*20 So he got up and went to his father. "But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him.*

*21 "The son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.'*

*22 "But the father said to his servants, 'Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. 23 Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let's have a feast and celebrate. 24 For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.' So they began to celebrate.*

In Luke 15 Jesus tells us that the Father had forgiven the son before he even asked.

What did this do? This in turn gave the son new life and the power to live.

**TRANSITION:** Once we have received the forgiveness of God in Christ, and taken the steps to begin forgiving others, then we must finally be willing to forgive ourselves.

### III. Forgiving ourselves.

A. Several years ago I almost got myself killed.

1. Story: My son Andy was learning to golf.

I was teaching him how to swing a nine iron.

I was not paying full attention and when he swung he accidentally hit me near my temple with the golf club.

Blood was everywhere. I nearly passed out. It took 20 stitches to close the wound.

2. I was nearly killed.

3. Most of all I was embarrassed and angry at myself. Plagued for weeks with **"should haves" and "if onlys."**

4. Finally I Realized: "shoulds" and "if onlys" do not correct the past! They only heap on more guilt with a demand to correct that which cannot be corrected.

5. Finally, the pattern of self-anger was broken when I stopped using the language of **"shoulds" and "if onlys."**

6. Replaced this negative language with positive language of **"Ought" and "I did".**

7. **This is what I used to say:**

*I should have been more careful, you dummy,  
if only I would have thought it through,  
if only I weren't so dumb,  
if only I had paid more attention to the golf club....  
on and on."*

8. Replaced my negative language with language like this:  
*I ought to have been more careful, but I wasn't, therefore I accept the consequences of my foolishness and determine to be more careful in the future.*
9. When it comes to your sin, your shame, your guilt many of you are plagued with "shoulds and if onlys."
- a. Those words will never set you free-they will continue to make you guilty and filled with anger and shame and you will never be able to forgive yourself.
  - b. What can you do?
  - c. Change your language about yourself and your sin.
  - d. Turn it into something like this:  
*I ought not to have committed that sin, however I did. I am sorry and have received Jesus forgiveness, I am forgiving others involved, and I will forgive myself. With Jesus help and power I will not make that mistake again.*
  - e. **STOP** look at yourself as dirty, shame-filled, or repulsive.
  - f. Instead **Look** into Jesus' eyes and see how he sees you:
    1. He sees you totally clean.
    2. He sees you with great love and affection
    3. He sees you for what you are becoming, not for what you have done.

- g. Some of you have forgiven yourself and therefore are free of the guilt and shame.
- h. Some of you cannot shake yourself free of guilt and shame and feel you must punish yourself for the rest of your life.

**Jesus has a word for you: NO!**

*"I have come, says Jesus, in order that they might have life, and life abundant. John 10:10*

j. If Jesus has forgiven you-you are forgiven.

1. To continue to beat yourself up, to curse yourself, to hold yourself in loathing is to DISRESPECT THE FORGIVING POWER OF JESUS CHRIST.

1. He has forgive you-he is God.

3. You are not God, you do not have the final say and to not forgive yourself is to mock who Jesus is.

k. How do you get rid of that guilt and never have it again?

Close your eyes.

2. Imagine carrying a physical burden-your sin and the fact that you have not forgiveness yourself.

3. You meet Jesus along the path-He asks about your burden of SIN-*Why are you carrying this?*

4. He is stretching out his hands to you right now: He says, "Give it to me". Give it to him right now, (Pause)

5. From this moment on you do not have the power or the arm length to take it back. Try and discover You cannot.
6. When you feel you cannot forgive yourself-see yourself attempting to take back from Jesus the guilt, the sin, the shame he has taken on.
7. You cannot take it back! Jesus will not let you! It no longer belongs to you nor are you responsible for it.

From this moment forward change the way you talk about yourself into the positive and verbally proclaim that Jesus as the one who has forever taken away your sin.

**Today you have choices to make:**

**Choose to be a conqueror rather than a victim.**

**Choose to acknowledge that Your sins are all forgiven.**

**Chose to Forgive others.**

**Chose to Forgive yourself.**

**Chose to Live in this great truth.**

**Yellow Card:**

**\_\_\_\_\_ At this moment I will choose to turn my sin over to Jesus and not take it back.**

**\_\_\_\_\_ There are people I need to forgive and today I choose to walk in Jesus forgiveness toward them.**

**\_\_\_\_\_ Today, I will forgive myself for Jesus sake honoring his forgiveness and love for me.**

**Amen**

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