



Key Notes

I'M FREE!

Your guilt is taken away and your sin atoned for... (Isaiah 6:7)

What do you do with a guilty conscience? There is not one of us who has not sought an answer to this most fundamental moral question. For those who leave God out of the equation, the options for guilt management are few.

- **Denial.** *What, me guilty?* We pretend we did no wrong and hope that the passage of time will somehow make our guilt go away. But like disconnecting that annoying buzzer in your car that tells you to buckle your seat belt, this is no way to deal with the danger you face down the road.
- **Rationalization.** We make excuses, hoping that if we can "explain" our actions, our guilt will somehow go away. *I was just a teenager... No one got hurt... I was so depressed at the time...*
- **Blame.** *"Me? It wasn't my fault!"* We take the role of victim, blaming our behavior on our genes, parents, blood sugar, or the economy.
- **Compensation.** We imagine that guilt in one area can be alleviated by virtue in another. The lady who had the abortion becomes an activist to eliminate global hunger hoping this will make her feel better.
- **Self-punishment.** Guilt, like debt, demands payment. But how? And to whom? We devise clever ways to punish ourselves, hoping this will somehow atone for our sins.
- **Justification.** Rather than change our behavior, we change the moral code. We "justify" our actions by trying to *make* them just. But tampering with God's moral law is like tampering with the law of gravity. We don't break the law, we break ourselves in fighting against it!

These methods simply don't work. They only treat symptoms. The source of the problem remains. Like trying to fend off a loan shark, we pay the interest forever because we are unable to pay off the principal. There is only one cure for a guilty conscience, and Isaiah discovered it: **confession.** *I am a man of unclean lips... (6:5)* When he stopped trying to manage the symptoms and admitted the truth about his sin, his guilt was taken away and his sin was atoned for!

Friend, are you struggling with guilt this morning? In worship, God is creating a safe place to deal with dangerous issues. Stop trying to manage your guilt by methods that will never work. Come clean by confessing your sins to God. Then you can discover what Isaiah did: the truth will set you free!

If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. (1 John 1:8-9)

Pastor Stan