

**DONCASTER
CHURCH OF CHRIST**

2022

Study 3

COPING WITH GUILT

1. **Which of these come closest to your feelings about guilt?**
 - a. I rarely feel guilty.
 - b. I feel guilty all the time and I cannot identify why.
 - c. There are a few things in the past that I still feel guilty about.
 - d. Guilt has helped me grow.
 - e. When I go to church it makes me feel more guilty.
 - f. When I go to church I feel less guilty.

2. **A Sydney church had a sign that read, “You are entering a guilt free zone.”**
 - a. Why would a church have a sign like that?
 - b. Should a church be a “guilt free zone”?
 - c. What is the difference between a guilt free zone and freedom from guilt?

3. **The Bible uses different language to imply that that our guilt should not prevent us from having a relationship with God. Have a go at matching the following word with its meaning.**

a. Atonement	b. Justification	c. Propitiation
d. Reconciliation	e. Redemption	f. Expiation

Meanings:

 - i. God, through Jesus, paid the price to release us from slavery to sin and frees us from guilt.
 - ii. The Holy God wants to overcome the gap that exists between Him and his guilty people.
 - iii. Even though we are guilty, God pronounces us “not guilty”.
 - iv. God made the moves to be at one with his people, even though they are the ones who strayed.
 - v. God in his mercy and powerful love, is prepared to act as if our guilt was removed.
 - vi. As in the Old Testament the sacrifice brought about the forgiveness of God, so Jesus’ sacrifice also brings us freedom from guilt.

4. **The sermon distinguishes between appropriate and inappropriate guilt. Discuss which of the following could be described as “appropriate guilt”?**
 - a. A policeman uses capsicum spray on a violent criminal who soon after dies of a heart attack.
 - b. A mother who had an abortion 15 years ago, is close to tears every time she has a conversation with a boy in mid-teens.
 - c. A father who has left home following an affair feels guilty when his 4-year-old asks him, “Daddy, when are you coming home?”
 - d. A doctor who has diagnosed a throat infection discovers eventually that his patient has advanced cancer of the larynx.
 - e. A mother feels guilty when she takes her 3-month-old child to Childcare on the way to work.
 - f. A worshipper leaves the church after a disagreement with the minister and the minister feels guilty.

SOME BIBLE PASSAGES ABOUT GUILT

5. Read Psalm 51.

- a. What are the general feelings of the author?
- b. What do you think he had done?
- c. What does the author know about God?
- d. What words does the author use to describe what God can do with sin and guilt
- e. What does the author think of the old ways of dealing with guilt, such as sacrifices in the temple?
- f. What is guilt doing to the author?

6.
 - a. Are there any hints that the author had learnt a lesson through his guilt?
 - b. Is this a meaningful psalm for you? Why/ Why not?

7. **Read Isaiah 6. 1-9.**
 - a. What is all this about “seraphim” etc? What do you think Isaiah was trying to say about God?
 - b. Why is God described as “Holy Holy Holy”? Wouldn’t one “holy” have been enough?
 - c. What does it mean to call God Holy?

8. **See verses 5-6**
 - a. What is it that makes Isaiah feel guilty?
 - b. Can you work out a ‘theology of guilt’ from verse 6? What is the vision teaching us about guilt?
 - c. Have you ever felt a great relief from guilt? How did it come about? What were your feelings before and afterwards? Was God involved in the process?

9. **See verses 8-9.**
 - a. What difference did the whole experience of understanding the holiness of God and experiencing forgiveness do for Isaiah?
 - b. If you have had an experience of relief from guilt, what did it do for you?

10. **Read Romans 5. 1-11.**
 - a. What has this passage to do with guilt?
 - b. What words are used to describe the fact that God wants us to overcome our guilt?
 - c. If you have had an experience of relief from guilt, what did it do for you?

11.
 - a. How would you explain this passage to a person who was unfamiliar with the Bible?
 - b. What has Jesus got to do with our general feelings of guilt?
 - c. It has been said that to continually feel guilty is a form of “ongoing blasphemy.” How does this passage throw light on that comment?

12. **In the light of this study how would you respond to the following comments?**
 - a. There are times I feel so bad about some of the things that I have done I doubt that I am really a Christian.
 - b. Sometimes I feel as if the sermon is aimed right at me. How does he know what I have been up to?
 - c. My cousin suicided a year ago today. I still feel as if I let him down.
 - d. I felt guilty about what I was doing to people so I resigned from my job.
 - e. It has been three weeks since I have been to see my Mum at the nursing home. I was feeling so guilty that I dropped my small group and went to see her.