



LIVE GUILT FREE

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CAN I TRULY LIVE GUILT FREE?

By Richard & Tanya Curren

Recently our son came to us and told us that he was having a difficult time forgiving himself for something he had done, even though he knew that God forgave him. He grasped the concept that he was forgiven by God and by his parents, yet he was struggling with the guilt that came with his actions and was having a hard time forgive himself.

Has this happened to you? If it has, you are not alone because it has happened to us and everyone we know. It's part of being human because we all make bad choices at different points in our lives. This is not about trying to be "perfect," but it is about choosing each day to make wise choices that bring us peace.

As we talked with our son, we reminded him of several things. First, he is not alone. Many people can grasp that God forgives them, yet the hardest part is choosing to forgive themselves. We told him that this is something that sometimes takes time and definitely takes intentional work. It can be very easy to say, "Well God forgives you, so you should forgive yourself." But the reality is that sometimes this is a process and takes time. This is perfectly normal and ok. Trying to push yourself into a specific time frame for anything just causes stress and anxiety.

After letting him know he was not alone, we told him to stop thinking about what he had done and focus on forgiving himself and moving forward. This is a huge step in general. Many people stay stuck in the past or in a negative state of mind because they don't choose to move forward. They allow the decisions of their choices to stay in the forefront of their mind and don't find positive ways to move forward in life.

As we know, different choices produce different outcomes. It can be very easy to forgive yourself for being rude to someone, asking for their forgiveness and then moving on once they've forgiven you. But sometimes in life, we make choices that are life-altering and completely change the course of our life. In these situations it can be extremely difficult to move forward because you are faced with a completely new life's path and consequences that consume your thoughts and impact your day to day living and relationships. Even if you are experiencing severe consequences from your actions, it is so important that you choose to

forgive yourself. It may be very hard and you may have to work on this for a long time, but it is the only way to live a life of peace.

This is such an important concept to grasp: forgiveness is a choice. Often we forgive others based on our emotions. We will forgive someone if they seem like they are “sorry enough” or if they pull on our heart strings while they are apologizing. But what about when someone gives a half-hearted apology or doesn’t even apologize at all? It can be infuriating to know that someone has wronged you, yet they are oblivious or unwilling to admit wrongdoing! Even in these situations, it is vital that you choose to forgive.

Whether you did something that negatively impacted your life or someone did something to you, choosing to forgive is the **ONLY** way to have a guilt free life of peace and freedom.

Here are some practical ways you can truly live guilt free:

FORGIVE YOURSELF AND OTHERS

No matter how hard this is, make it something you intentionally focus on each day. Don’t allow anything or anyone to steal your peace. When your thoughts begin to consume you, focus on something different. We helped our son work through this by teaching him to speak out loud when negative thoughts try to make him feel guilty. It is virtually impossible to be speaking positive words while thinking negative thoughts at the same time, so this is a very effective way to break a pattern of negativity in your mind.

BUILD YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD

This is your personal relationship to enjoy and maximize to the fullest. And this is the best way for you to live a passionate life! If you are feeling like you are missing something or need to feel more connected on a personal level with God, start each day by praying and seeking His will for your life. This relationship will sustain you through anything and everything you face, and it is just like a human relationship – the more you put into it and develop it, the stronger the bond becomes.

NEVER CONFUSE THE WILL OF THE MAJORITY WITH THE WILL OF GOD

This is one of our many mottos in life. By choosing to forgive ourselves and building that firm foundation and relationship with God, we are able to know what His will is for our lives. This makes it very clear and much easier to step out in faith, despite what anyone else thinks. If you look at our life and the choices we have made to step out in immense faith for Boundless Limits and our huge Scaly Adventures project, it goes very contrary to living a “safe” life. If we had based our decisions on our bank account alone, we would never have done most of the things we’ve chosen to do! But we are so in tune with what

God is directing us to do that we live our life by following His lead. We highly recommend this way of living, because even though your bank account may not be fat, your life will be full and very rewarding. Remember, blessings from God come in SO many ways, and one of those ways is unity within your home, the ability to reach far more than you imagined and the reality of being someone who is instrumental in changing the world!

PRACTICE INTENTIONAL LIVING

We laugh when we remember days in college where we used to sleep in until noon, eat whatever we wanted and chill out all day watching tv. Remember those days?! Why did we ever think we were stressed out back then? For us, those days are long gone, as we are in a season of a lot of hard work. And while it is important to have days off, sleep in and relax, it is far more important to choose to live each day with intentional purpose. If you have ever faced a tragedy or a life-threatening situation, this will probably be easier for you. Once you have been faced with something that reminds you of your mortality and the very short time we have here on Earth to make a difference and leave lasting changes, you become very focused. But even if you haven't had a dramatic, life-altering event, it is important that you know the value of your time and live each day in a way that makes a difference. You can do this in very simple ways, too. Calling someone to encourage them, praying for someone, working out, eating healthier, changing a bad habit, speaking more positively...all of these are simple things you can focus on each day that will produce dramatic changes and outcomes over time. If you haven't tried this yet, pick something each day that you can be very intentional about and watch how it changes you and others around you.

HAVE COMPASSION FOR YOURSELF

It can be so easy to have compassion for everyone else in the world, yet go home and totally beat yourself up each night. If you find it easy to give someone else grace, leeway, and second chances but never do this for yourself, start practicing having compassion for YOU. This starts with forgiving yourself and then reminding yourself daily that you are just like everyone else – an amazing work in progress. You will continue to make mistakes, just like every other person in the world. Focus on not beating yourself up and not repeating negative thoughts toward yourself. Focus on giving yourself the same compassion that you give away to others. The result of this will be huge in the guilt it removes from you!

INSPIRE YOUR CHILDREN

Taking the lessons you've learned in your life and teaching them to your children is SO incredibly powerful! By creating an environment in your home where your kids are comfortable talking with you about anything and everything, you are leaving doors of opportunity open for inspirational teachable moments. We love these! We jump on every opportunity possible to talk with our son and to use experiences both from our past and what we are experiencing now to encourage him. We don't try to hide life's difficulties or act like everything is perfect.

Instead, we use the adversities we face to prove God's faithfulness and to inspire him to take any adversity he faces and turn it into purpose. By taking the time to do this with your children, you are empowering them you are leaving a lasting legacy that will reach more than you know.

The bottom line answer to the question, "Can I truly live guilt free?" is **YES**. Yes you can! It takes time, intentional thoughts, effort, relationship building with the Lord, leaps of faith and compassion for yourself and others, but the reality is that you **CAN** live a life free of guilt if you choose to. This is our desire for you, and more importantly, it is God's desire for you!

Every single effort you put into creating positive changes matters. No matter how big or small, you have the ability to create and bring change that will positively impact your life and the world around you. You will be blessed and strengthened by each and every effort you put into living a peace filled life!

God bless you,

Rick & Tanya

ABOUT THE AUTHORS



Richard R. Curren III is the co-founder and President of Boundless Limits International, Live Guilt Free and Best Life Strategies. He is a regular co-host of WATC TV's *ATLANTA LIVE*, an inspirational television show broadcast internationally. He is the co-author of **ON COURSE: Strategies For Successful Living** and its companion **ON COURSE: Life Application Study Guide**. He is also the producer of several inspirational videos including "*IT'S ABOUT TIME!*", which has been broadcast on television worldwide. He is also the developing producer for Scaly Adventures, a positive influential outreach to children using animals and nature to explore the wonders of God's creation. Rick's passion is to speak and motivate others to live to their maximum potential physically, mentally and spiritually. Through their events and publications, Rick and his wife Tanya inspire others and show that every person has boundless potential to change our world. He is a former United States Army Officer. Rick serves on the Board of Directors for the So Help Me God Project as an Advisor and is a founding Board Member. With a passion for health and fitness, he is a 2nd Degree Black Belt in Korean Olympic Tae Kwon Do, and serves as an Associate Instructor for Palmetto Martial Arts School.



Tanya Curren is the co-founder of Boundless Limits International, Live Guilt Free and Best Life Strategies. She is a regular co-host of WATC TV's *ATLANTA LIVE*, an inspirational television show broadcast internationally. She is also the co-author of **ON COURSE: Strategies For Successful Living** and the **ON COURSE Life Application Study Guide**, which has been distributed worldwide. In 2004 Tanya Curren was in a life threatening coma for 8 days as a deadly infection ravaged her body. Given two hours to live, she survived only to face the ordeal of a painful three year recovery. She is the author of **Broken Places, The Proverbs Devotion Guide, Embracing Change & Conflict**, and several other audio CD's. Tanya and her husband, Rick, are developing producers for Scaly Adventures, a positive influential outreach to children using animals and nature to explore the wonders of God's creation. In her conferences and seminars, Tanya shares with others the life-lessons she learned through her journey to restoration. Tanya travels and speaks at local, regional and international venues, and is passionate about guiding others to have a personal, real relationship with Jesus Christ. As an active homeschooling mother, she resides with her family in the mountains of South Carolina.