

God Can Help You Forgive | Outrageous #1

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God promises us things that seem impossible and unattainable. He says that he can heal us, transform us, forgive us, and even make us a new person. Those are truly outrageous promises! But God doesn't just make promises, he follows through on them too. One promise God makes is that he can help you forgive yourself. Many people struggle with forgiving themselves. Let's look at three specific types of mistakes that are especially difficult to forgive in ourselves.

Mistakes They Should Not Have Made in the First Place

Some people have a "zero tolerance policy" for themselves when it comes to mistakes. These perfectionistic people experience a lot of guilt when they mess up, especially if the mistake was seemingly avoidable. They have a difficult time extending themselves grace in situations. They can hold on to negative feelings about themselves, carrying them around, and letting them affect their decisions and actions.

[Related: [If You Struggle with Unforgiveness](#)]

Mistakes They Made in the Past

These people have difficulty forgiving themselves over serious transgressions made in their past. Memories of mistakes made are replayed over and over again in their minds on an endless loop of self-judgment. They often do not believe that others, or God, could ever forgive such a serious mistake.

Mistakes They Made Over Missed Opportunities

Many people live with tremendous regret and guilt over the missed opportunities they didn't take advantage of in their lives. Distracted or "workaholic" parents experience guilt over neglecting their kids when they were young. Husbands, whose wives left them because they made work or money their mistress, may feel shame over their failure to invest in the marriage.

The good news is that God can help you forgive yourself for any mistakes you have made, regardless of the severity or consequences. A great example of this is the story of the apostle Paul in the Bible. Saul, who was later renamed Paul, was in need of tremendous forgiveness for his decisions and actions. He made it his full time mission to wipe out as many Christians as possible and used his religious station to make it happen ([Acts 9:1-2](#); [Acts 22:4-5](#)). Fortunately for Saul, Jesus's forgiveness was more outrageous than his sin.

How to Forgive Yourself

1. Be Honest About Your Sin

Jesus went to great lengths to confront Saul/Paul of his mistakes. Saul was on his way to persecute another group of Christ followers when Jesus appeared to him, and blatantly told him he was sinning against God. In order to receive forgiveness, you have to be honest with yourself about your situation, just like Jesus was with Saul. You don't need to hide behind the lies you tell yourself for fear of what Jesus thinks because he already paid the price to forgive you.

[Related: [What Is True Repentance?](#)]

2. Appreciate the Price Jesus Paid

The Bible tells us that a heavy price had to be paid to provide forgiveness. The price was so steep and so costly that only Jesus was qualified to pay the penalty. He is the pure and spotless Lamb and only he was qualified to pay the total penalty. Fortunately, that is exactly what he did.

Hebrews 10:11-18 (MSG) *Every priest goes to work at the altar each day, offers the same old sacrifices year in, year out, and never makes a dent in the sin problem. As a priest, Christ made a single sacrifice for sins, and that was it! Then he sat down right beside God and waited for his enemies to cave in. It was a perfect sacrifice by a perfect person to perfect some very imperfect people. By that single offering, he did everything that needed to be done for everyone who takes part in the purifying process.*

In the Bible, “sitting down” carries the idea that an action is finished. It is completed. It is done. God is done with your guilt so that we can be released from its control as well.

[\[Related: How Forgiveness Works\]](#)

3. Don't Look Back

All of us have memories and regrets that not only haunt us, but keep us from letting go of the past and experiencing the forgiveness Christ has for us.

Philippians 3:13-14 *...but I focus on this one thing: Forgetting the past and looking forward to what lies ahead, I press on to reach the end of the race and receive the heavenly prize for which God, through Christ Jesus, is calling us.*

The apostle Paul teaches us an important lesson about forgiveness – we can't look back. No more living looking in the rearview mirror. Because Christ has forgiven us, we can forgive ourselves. Because he is done with our sin, we can be done with it also.

Discussion Questions:

1. Watch the video together or invite someone to summarize the topic.
2. What is the most outrageous gift anyone has ever given you? How did that gift make you feel?
3. What are some typical mistakes that a person might make that bother them throughout their lives?
4. If you are willing, share a mistake that you've made in the past that bothered you for a long time or still haunts you.
5. Read [Acts 9:1-2](#); [Acts 22:4-5](#). Describe Paul's life before meeting Jesus. Why do you think Jesus confronted Paul so directly about his sin (see [Acts 9:4-9](#))?
6. The first step to forgiveness is to be honest. Why do you think it so difficult for us to admit our sin to God and one another?
7. Read [Hebrews 10:11-18](#). How is Jesus's sacrifice better than the sacrifices the priests made each day? How can this passage help Christians who still feel guilt over their sin?
8. Read [Philippians 3:13-14](#). Why do you think Paul tells us to not look back in our lives?
9. Write a personal action step based on this conversation.