

# **SORROW AND GUILT?**

## **Self-examination.**

### **Thoughts on guilt and sorrow.**

- ✓ *Sorrow is healthy, guilt sickening.*
- ✓ *Sorrow leads us to God; guilt takes us away from Him*
- ✓ *Sorrow uplifts us, guilt crushes us/*
- ✓ *Sorrow brings pardon and peace, guilt despair.*

### **Uses of these Jottings**

- ✓ *Examination of attitudes.*
- ✓ *Talks. Discussion Groups*
- ✓ *Preparation for reconciliation.*

## **A Startling Fact: The Case of Peter and Judas**

In the New Testament narrative, we find two men, Peter and Judas, whose history throughout their lives, showed an amazing similarity except at their very end.

### **In Their Discipleship:**

- Both had been equally called by Jesus ( Mt./28-30)
- For three years, they followed their master and lived with him a life of intimacy, sharing with Him their joys and hardships. ( Jn.11/16)
- Both were faithful to Jesus till Palm Sunday.

### **In their Fall and Betrayal:**

- Each betrayed their master on the fateful night of Maundy Thursday
- Jesus predicted their fall. (Peter's Mt. 26/31-35). (Judas Mt. 26/20-25)
- Jesus' predictions came true. (Peter's Mt. 26/69-74. (Judas' Mt.26/47-50)
- Judas betrayed his master for the sake of money. Peter for the sake of his 'skin'
- Soon after their betrayal, both regretted their sin. (Peter. Mt.26/75). (Judas Mt.27/3-5)

### **However, the outcome of their fall and regret was completely different, nay opposite**

- Peter came closer to Jesus. Judas went further away. Why?
- Peter was reconciled with Jesus, Judas did not. Why?
- Peter grew in greater love for his master, Judas was driven to despair. Why?
- Peter regained his former position and pre-eminence among the twelve disciples. Judas went and hanged himself. Why?

**BEFORE YOU PROCEED TO EXAMINE YOUR ATTITUDES  
TOWARDS YOUR SINS, STOP AND REFLECT**

### **Why there was such great difference between Peter's and Judas' attitudes towards Jesus.**

- Peter believed in Jesus' love before his sin, but even after denying his Master, he still believed that Jesus loved him all the same. Peter accepted the unconditional love of Jesus – sin or no sin!
- Judas, before his betrayal, believed in the love of Jesus for him. Unfortunately, he could not believe that Jesus loved him after his sin! He could not accept Jesus' unconditional love for him – traitor or no traitor!

### **Why there was such a vast difference between Peter' and Judas' repentance?**

- After his sin, Peter **felt 'sorry'** for having offended his Master who loved him so much. Peter's main concern was Jesus and Jesus feelings, not his own. Peter was moved by 'sorrow'.
- Peter accepted the fact that he was a sinner, and humbly accepted Jesus' love and forgiveness?
- Judas after his sin **felt guilty**. He could not accept the 'unconditional love' of Jesus for him now a traitor, a sinner!
- He felt that he could not be forgiven. Judas in despair turned against himself. How could he accept himself after betraying his Master?
- Since he could not forgive himself, gripped by 'guilt'. He hung himself

### **Differences between "Guilt" and "Sorrow" and their consequences**

- Sorrow is born of trust and humility. I know I am a sinner, I know I cannot help myself, yet humbly I accept God's free gift of his love and unconditional forgiveness
- Sorrow brings peace joy, and reassurance. It makes us feel closer to God. It helps us to love ourselves as God loves us - yes, unconditionally
- Honest sorrow for my sins; turns my sins from stumbling blocks into stepping stones on my path to God. My very sins take me closer to God.
- Guilt is born of pride and distrust. A proud person, implicitly or explicitly, believes that he has to earn God's love and forgiveness. Pride and distrust prevent us from accepting God's free unconditional forgiveness and our radical incapacity to help ourselves..
- Since we feel incapable to earn God's love and forgiveness, guilt leads us away from God and drives us to self-destruction.
- It is harder for us to accept love than to give love. It's harder to believe in someone's love for us than to love him.

### **CONCLUSION:**

**However serious our sins may be, let us keep in mind the Good News of Jesus:**

- God's love is greater than our sins.
- God sent his only Son to us to save the world not to condemn it.
- God loves sinners and just' alike.
- God loves the sinner though he dislikes his sin.
- Jesus came to die for all of us.
- Jesus said: I came to call sinners to repentance, not the just and the virtuous.

## **AN EXAMINATION OF OUR ATTITUDES TOWARDS GOD'S LOVE AND FORGIVENESS.**

### **DO YOU FEEL ' GUILTY' OR 'SORRY'**

By answering to yourself the questions placed below, you may discover whether you are moved by 'guilt' or by 'sorrow' when you repent.

1. After you have asked God pardon for yours sins, can you feel at peace with God and at ease with yourself?
2. At confession, do you keep confessing time and again sins already confessed before?
3. Do you often make general confessions?
4. Are you compulsive, scrupulous, even obsessive as regards your prayers: for instance, whether you said them or not, about distractions at prayer, about your religious duties, and similar things?
5. When faced with trials and difficulties, have you ever has a 'feeling that God is punishing you for your past sins?
6. Can you live in peace with your shortcomings and faults?
7. Do you do penances and sacrifices just to make up for your sins?
8. Do you say prayers or do you perform your duties to merit or earn God's love and forgiveness?
9. After you sinned, can you get yourself to feel that God loves you all the same?
10. When you have done wrong or shameful acts, can you, in spite of your sins, still love yourself as God loves you? Do you hate yourself because of them?

## **MEDITATION AND PRAYER**

### **New Testament Quotes on God's Love and Forgiveness for Prayer and Meditation**

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|---------|----------|--|
| 1. Acts | 9/1-18   | Conversion of St. Paul ( Specially V. 15)              |
| 2. John | 21/15-17 | Because of his fall, Peter grew in the love of Jesus   |
| 3. Luke | 18/9-14  | The Publican and the Pharisee. God accepts the humble. |
| 4. Mark | 2/13-17  | Mathew. I have come to call sinners to repentance.     |

5. Luke 19/1-10 Zacchaeus. The Son of Man has come to find the lost.  
Romans 3/9-31; 5/1-11; 8/31-39 God's love, salvation, forgiveness and Justification is a  
free gift of God It cannot be earned or demanded, but  
only accepted.

### **A PRAYER TO REMEMBER**

Whenever, unhappily, you sinned, honestly and peacefully say:

**“Father, unfortunately, I have sinned,  
but in my very bones,  
I still know that you love me all the same.  
I can equally say to you  
That I love you all the same.  
Help me to love myself all the same!  
I am truly sorry for my sin;  
I will sincerely strive not to sin again!”.**