

## The Struggle With Guilt

~Other Speakers S-Z: Charles Stanley:

1 John 1:5-9

Many faithful believers struggle daily with the issue of guilt. Some may even believe that guilt is a vital part of the healthy Christian life. This is a dangerous fallacy that we must completely avoid.

The difficulty arises in part from a misconception about what guilt is. Basically, it is a sense of wrongdoing, an emotional conflict that arises from second thoughts about something we have done. What's more, guilt can be confused with godly "conviction." In order to understand the issue of guilt, we must learn the difference.

Conviction comes as the Holy Spirit makes us cognizant of the discrepancy between God's standards for living and our behavior. When we feel this conviction, we must name that sinful behavior, confess it to God, and turn away from it. At that moment, the issue is settled; God does not want us suffocating in a lingering cloud of guilt. He came to set us free!

Guilt, however, does not bring the freedom that comes through conviction. On the contrary, it works to strangle us and render us utterly useless to God. Does this sound familiar? Have you ever been so wracked with guilt that you were incapable of doing anything worthwhile? That's the effect of false guilt, which can derive from erroneous biblical teaching, criticism, a troubled upbringing, or low self-esteem. These are all tools of Satan, whose greatest desire is to make us ineffective.

Don't allow false guilt to control your life. You are free in Christ Jesus. Exercise that freedom today by allowing God to remove the crushing weight of guilt.