



If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

1 John 1:9

Guilt

As I write this devotion, Justin Bieber's songs are dominating the iTunes top 100. One of those hits is titled, "Sorry," and it includes the following lyrics: "I just need one more shot at forgiveness. I know you know that I made those mistakes maybe once or twice, and by once or twice, I mean maybe a couple a hundred times. So let me redeem myself tonight." Mr. Bieber is confessing something we know well: we ruin things and need forgiveness.

What is your natural reaction when you realize you have done something wrong? Do you put it on Facebook? Do you shout it from the rooftops? No, like our ancestors, Adam and Eve, we try to hide our sins and imperfections as much as possible. We are not afraid that God will treat us unfairly, far from it. If we're honest, we are afraid that God will treat us exactly the way we deserve. We know it in our hearts.

King David was very familiar with the struggle of hiding sin. He wrote in Psalm 32: "When I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long." As teenagers, guilt can eat us up inside. Guilt can even chew up and spit out faith if we don't deal with it correctly.

The apostle John saw Jesus as the answer to the shame of Adam and Eve. Yes, we deserve to be ditched, but God was faithful and rescued us through his Son. Jesus tackled our sin head on, wrestling it to the ground and triumphing over it, even as he slumped in death. This is a beautiful picture of God's justice.

Jesus' work means that we can be honest with God about our sin. That honesty is on display when we stand as a body of believers and confess our sins. We stop pretending we're something we're not. In a high school world that can seem full of fake things, we find a moment of honesty among God's family. We stand convicted and then hear God's words of forgiveness again.

God has kept his promises to you; there's no reason to hide. Let the joy of your forgiveness be evident in all you do.

PRAYER:

Lord God, create in me a new heart, one that takes time to reflect on your undeserved love. When I struggle with the guilt of my sin, let me run *to you* instead of *from you*. Amen.