

You Can't Forgive Yourself

Forgiving yourself is impossible. That is why the Bible never commands us to forgive ourselves. When you are forgiven by God, all your sins are paid in full.

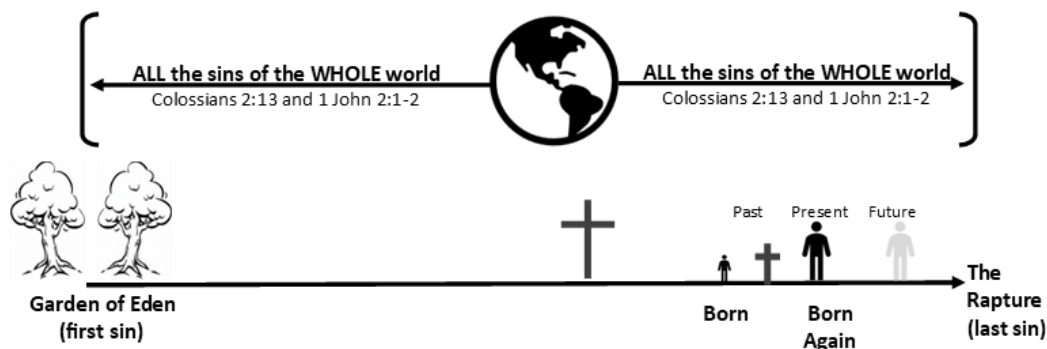
You cannot forgive yourself of a sin that has already been forgiven and removed as far as the east is from the west.

You cannot be both the judge and the defendant. That is why you can't forgive yourself. However, what is impossible for you, God has already done.



Reasons We Think We Need to Forgive Ourselves

1. We have been told to forgive ourselves.
2. We operate according to the flesh as if we were still under the law and therefore establish high expectations for ourselves that we cannot keep.
3. We believe we could do better instead of agreeing that apart from Christ, we can do nothing.
4. When we fail our expectations and standards to do better, we feel the need to punish ourselves for every failure. Some of the ways we punish ourselves:
 - a. We use degrading, belittling, critical, and doubt-filled self-talk
 - b. We cannot accept love or acceptance from others or love and accept ourselves.
 - c. We feel guilty, like we should be punished and rejected.
 - d. We become conscious of sin instead of our righteousness in Christ.
5. We do not know and accept that Christ has already paid all our sins (past, present and future).



Results from Doubting Christ's Forgiveness

1. We will avoid God and others when we feel we need to be punished for sin.
 - a. If you owed a friend a lot of money and saw them in town, you would avoid them or hope they do not see you. The outstanding debt would make you fearfully self-conscious of your lack instead of friend-conscious with gratitude. Then guilt would overwhelm you. Then shame would overcome you for feeling guilty instead of grateful.
 - b. Likewise, if you do not receive God's unconditional forgiveness, you will pace and distance your relationship with God, fearing his punishment, rejection, and abandonment, which undermines your Christian confidence.

Biblical Examples

The Bible never commands us to "forgive yourself" but states that the believer is forgiven in Christ. You cannot justify yourself or make up for your sins. You certainly cannot offer a better sacrifice for your sins than Christ. The only thing you can do is ACCEPT and RECEIVE God's forgiveness in Christ.

1. King David and Peter both had powerful feelings from gross sin, failure, and falling short. When they received God's forgiveness, they did not need to forgive themselves. They were forgiven.
2. The Apostle Paul understood, taught, and accepted God's total forgiveness for persecuting the church and forgave himself the moment he knew God's forgiveness.
 - a. **Romans 8:1** Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.
 - b. **Romans 5:1** Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand; and we exult in hope of the glory of God.

Draw Near to God

Hebrews 4:16 Let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Hebrews 10:19–22 We have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He inaugurated for us through the veil, that is, His flesh, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.

As you draw near to God, God will draw near to comfort you and build you up in His love, acceptance, and righteousness. Christ paid for your sins so that you would not be conscious of them but instead be conscious of Him and His righteousness.

While you do not need to forgive yourself, it may be helpful to list the debts you are holding against yourself and confess them to God to ACCEPT His forgiveness that you already have in Christ.

Father God,

I have been loathing and trying to forgive myself instead of receiving Your forgiveness. I agree with Your word that I am already forgiven. I RECEIVE Your forgiveness as the basis for forgiving myself for _____, _____, _____, _____.

Thank you, Jesus, for making me righteous and acceptable to enter the throne of grace and stand before Father God, knowing that I am entirely accepted, loved, forgiven, and blessed. Father God, take the feelings of guilt and shame unto Yourself and exchange them for Your peace and acceptance.

Amen!

In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace which He lavished on us.

Ephesians 1:7–8