

The Guilt Loop Escape Clause

Many Christians are caught in a never ending loop because they want to do better in their Christian walk. They continue to fail and try harder. This does not work.

There is a way out and it is clearly outlined with only 3 passages of scripture.

For whosoever will save his life (soul – not zoe but psyche) shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life (soul – not zoe but psyche) for my sake shall find it.

Matthew 16:25

Quite simply you cannot save your own soul. You must allow Jesus to save it, not only once but continually. We always want to contribute something to our salvation. This does not work. It is pride that hinders us from continually surrendering to God.

John tells us:

20 For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knows all things.

21 Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God.

1 Jn. 3:20-21

When we fail to improve we feel guilty, so we resolve to try harder. This does not work. It only sets us up to fail again, and again. This is the failure loop.

John gives us a true Win-Win. When we feel guilty we need to realize that God's forgiveness, his free Grace, is perpetual. We have to choose to believe that we are not the person we feel like we are, but the person that God says we are. This is a choice, and it is by faith.

When we do improve then we have confidence that we are improving and that God hears and answers our prayers. Win-Win.

Paul expresses it differently than John.

14 For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin.

15 For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I.

16 If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good.

17 Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.

18 For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not.

19 For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do.

20 Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.

21 I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me.

22 For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: Rom 7:14-22

Here is how this works.

Verses 14, 21 & 22 first.

14 For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin.

21 I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me.

22 For I delight in the law of God after the inward man

Christians are in process while in this life. Deep inside we agree with God and want to walk in righteousness and holiness. But

our old nature holds us captive. God backs the winning side consistently. He understands our dilemma.

Verse 16 shows our consent.

16 If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good.

Verses 15 and 19 express our dilemma.

15 For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I.

19 For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do.

Verses 17 & 20 show the way out. These verses appear twice in Paul's explanation. This is for emphasis.

17 Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.

20 Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.

We simply disown the wrong actions. This is the escape clause. It is not a ruse. It is an act of faith. It is the way out of the loop. You have to believe you are the person God says you are and NOT the person you FEEL LIKE you are. After a while you actually ACT like you are the person God says you are because of his generous Grace working in you by faith.

The Sheep and the Goats show the the final results. Mt. 25: 31- 46

The sheep do not remember their good works because it was God in them enabling them to do what they could not do by self-effort.

The goats do not remember not doing the good works because they were always blind as to the proper goal and they failed for lack of knowing or wanting to do it.

What if it does not work? What if you do not really believe? What if you are faking it? It will not work. You cannot con God. He will deal with you. Scary? Yes! Loving? Yes!

Start living it now, by Grace, by faith, every day. And you will be free. Abandon self-effort. Abandon your own strength, or rather lack of it. Believe you are the person that God says you are. Die to self. Live in Christ. By His Grace. By His Holy Spirit.

An Illustration

Julius Caesar went down to Egypt because the Pharaoh had made Rome his executor. The old Pharaoh knew that his son and his daughter, Cleopatra, would be at war as to who would be the new ruler.

This is fictionalized and acted out in the film “Cleopatra” (1963) with Rex Harrison playing Caesar and Elizabeth Taylor playing Cleopatra.

Caesar had recently been proclaimed Dictator of Rome for a year by the Roman Senate. Caesar arrives in Egypt with his generals and legions. And the siblings are hard at it in the fight. Caesar restores order.

Before long Caesar falls in love with Cleopatra and she becomes pregnant with Caesar's child, a son.

When she gives birth, she names the boy Ptolemy Caesarion and wants him to become both the Pharaoh of Egypt and the Ruler of Rome. Cleopatra tells her handmaid to take the child and lay him at Caesar's feet. The handmaiden objects to laying the heir of Egypt at the feet of a Roman. Cleopatra makes it very clear that she will obey her order exactly.

When the baby is laid at Caesar's feet his generals look at each other nervously. Caesar picks up the child and proudly shows him around the room.

The handmaiden reports back to Cleopatra that Caesar had picked up the child. Cleopatra smiles and leans back to rest.

Cleopatra had checked Roman law and customs and understood that in picking up the child he had acknowledged the boy to be his Heir.

When we attempt to make ourselves righteous or holy for God by “trying harder” we will fail. When we fail if we lament, “Oh, I failed again. When will I get it right? I will just have to try harder,” we pick up the child. Failure becomes our inheritance and sets us up for the next failure.

At some point you will have to act on The Escape Clause and surrender your failures to Jesus. Die to self. Give up your self-righteous, “holier than thou” attitude, and keep giving it up until

you begin to notice change, your actions will change, your attitudes will change, others will notice.