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NEWSLETTER



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# Confronting **GUILT**

by CH (LTC) Steven Hokana  
USA (Ret.)

**From one warrior to another — we have to talk about it. King David challenges us to take guilt to heart.** He was a warrior king. David knew and loved the Lord. David also was far from perfect and knew he had flaws. There is no one more perfect to speak to warriors about guilt. More so, through the Holy Spirit, David describes guilt, what it does, and how God rescues us from its devastation by pointing to Jesus:

“Blessed is the one whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man against whom the Lord counts no iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no deceit.” (PSALM 32:1–2)

Guilt is not a popular topic. Many avoid it like an IG inspection. It hurts. Guilt, if not dealt with properly, sits in the pit of our gut and festers. For many, the great fear is if we verbalize the “beast,” it will come to life and devour us! You, who serve and have served in uniform, know it is essential to talk about guilt in a manner leading to forgiveness under the cross of Jesus.

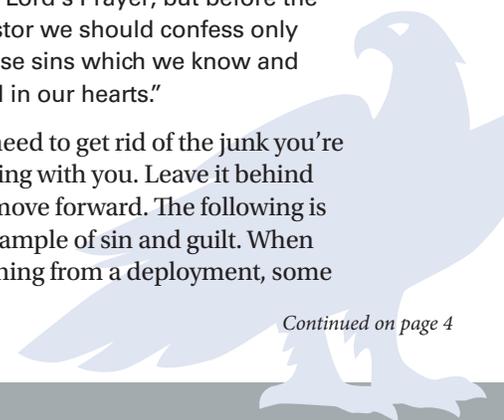
After every mission when we encounter the enemy, we are required

to debrief higher headquarters about “what went down.” Guilt needs to be debriefed, not to higher headquarters but to our Heavenly Father. In Luther’s Small Catechism we read:

“Before God we should plead guilty of all sins, even those we are not aware of, as we do in the Lord’s Prayer; but before the pastor we should confess only those sins which we know and feel in our hearts.”

You need to get rid of the junk you’re carrying with you. Leave it behind and move forward. The following is an example of sin and guilt. When returning from a deployment, some

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JEFF CLEMENTS PHOTOGRAPHY

# The power of Christ's **FORGIVENESS**

**God's truth about Jesus Christ is made known in the Bible and is its central message. We call this truth the Gospel, namely, the forgiveness of sins for Jesus' sake.** (THE SMALL CATECHISM, INTRODUCTION)



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King David describes the need for forgiveness:

"For my life is spent with sorrow, and my years with sighing; my strength fails because of my iniquity, and my bones waste away." (PSALM 31:10)

We know something must be done. We cannot "move on" unless we recognize and admit that we did wrong and are pardoned in Christ.

Opening up to God comes with a "sure-fire" promise: He will forgive your sins and take away your guilt. How is this done? He tells us in His word:

"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (1 JOHN 1:9)

You can pray about it. This is done in private. Just between you and the Lord. It's nobody's business at this point. Expressing the words of guilt out loud with no one else around reduces the stranglehold of the "beast." If this is difficult, you can write your prayer to God about the troubling event. Tell the Lord what you need to say to Him. Your sin may be ugly, but the cleansing supremacy of Christ on the cross can cover it and forgive you.

Another way is to always talk to a pastor. We read in Scripture:

"Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working." (JAMES 5:16)

Additionally, David sings of the necessity to stay tied to fellow believers:

"Therefore let everyone who is godly offer prayer to you at a time when you may be found; surely in the rush of great waters, they shall not reach him. You are a hiding place for me; you preserve me from trouble; you surround me with shouts of deliverance." (PSALM 32:6-7)

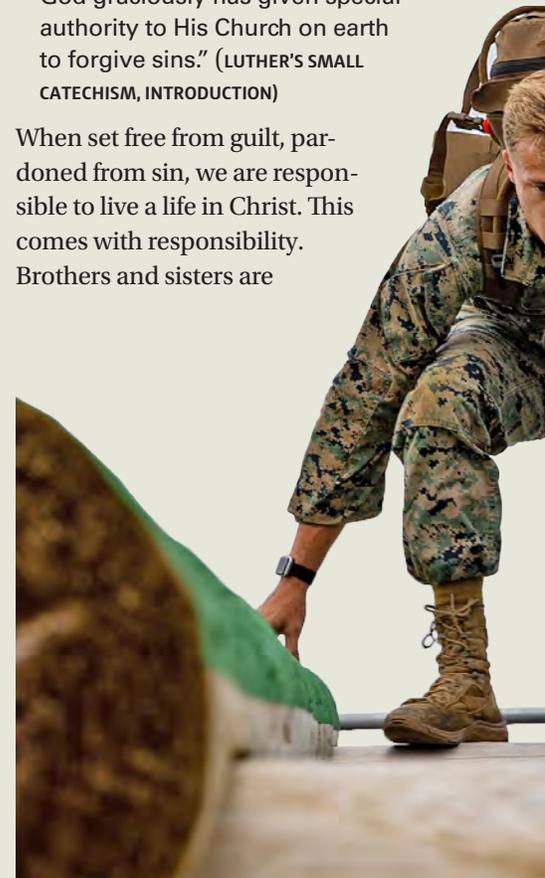
David is clear: If you've stopped going to church, re-engage. The Bible tells us:

"And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near." (HEBREWS 10:24-25)

Every Sunday you'll hear the words, "Your sins are forgiven." It is something to believe. Christ does all the "heavy lifting."

"As God's believing, baptized children, we still battle against sins of thought, word, and deed. But God graciously has given special authority to His Church on earth to forgive sins." (LUTHER'S SMALL CATECHISM, INTRODUCTION)

When set free from guilt, pardoned from sin, we are responsible to live a life in Christ. This comes with responsibility. Brothers and sisters are



hurting and need that same embrace from a loving God in Christ for forgiveness. The warrior king David tells us this is what we ought to do as we consolidate on the high hill of the forgiven:

“I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you with my loving eye upon you.”

(PSALM 32:8)

As God instructs you with His firm and loving hand, lift others up too. Make it your mission to save a fellow warrior from drowning in the sea of putrid guilt. What a powerful word in our arsenal: forgiveness — God’s great act of freeing us from sin, death and the power of the devil. Just as we have the need for forgiveness, we have a face and a name that can accomplish this: Jesus.

“There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death.”

(ROMANS 8:1)

Just remember there is a way to “DX” anger, pain and remorse over guilt. Replace it with joy and peace through our Lord Jesus. Ask God to pardon your sins for Jesus’ sake. Be real and tell Him what breaks your heart. The power is in His forgiveness won on the cross.



U.S. MARINE CORPS/LANCE CPL. SYDNI JESSEE



U.S. AIR FORCE/SENOR AIRMAN MICHAEL HUNSEKER

# 4 STEPS OF FORGIVENESS

## CCAA

It works. Follow all four steps and in the correct order.

And here are a couple of things to keep in mind:

- It is God who gives forgiveness as a wonderful gift.
- The absolution of God’s forgiveness is immediate and enduring.

1 ▶



**CONTRITION** (BROKEN HEART)  
A broken heart is seeing your own heart burdened by what happened. Feel sorry for what you have done.

2 ▶



**CONFESSION** (ACKNOWLEDGE)  
If we bottle up the guilt, it will come out in other unhealthy ways. Say the words, “Lord Jesus, I’m sorry; please forgive me.”

3 ▶



**ABSOLUTION** (SET FREE)  
You don’t do the absolving. God, or one representing Him, sets you free. For Jesus’ sake, God gives you the opportunity to say, “Forgive me, a sinful person.”

4 ▶



**AMENDMENT** (POSITIVE CHANGE)  
“Amend” means more than simply changing or modifying one’s behavior, actions and attitudes. To amend is to change for the better.



U.S. MARINE CORPS/PEC SAVANNAH BITTER

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are tempted to ship home contraband: an AK-47, a tattered enemy flag or ammo. A war trophy. When I was a kid, a soldier brought home an enemy hand grenade from theater. His younger brother found it and decided to show it to his friends. The results were devastating. The horror and burden, the pain and shame. This soldier carries that burdensome guilt. Forgiveness must be sought. This soldier can only receive forgiveness from the author of life cleansed by the suffering and death of His Son, our Savior, Jesus.

So, what do we do with guilt? First, come to our Lord seeking forgiveness, that He might wipe the guilt away. I've already dropped a few hints directing us to confession and absolution. Oh, how sinful we can be. Many a hard head wants to try their own method, kind of a "Christian-ish" approach. This leads to total destruction. Some people out of guilt abuse their bodies with sleepless nights fueled by alcohol and drugs. Others scroll the web diving into porn, some end up hanging in a rough crowd, just trying to belong and forget the pain and the shame. Others attempt to do anything to alleviate guilt and become "adrenalin junkies." A tragic second order of effect

**“ WE TIRE OF THE DEVASTATION GUILT HAS CAUSED. WE NEED HELP. THE ANSWER IS ROOTED IN THE PROMISES OF OUR GOD POINTING TO HIS SON, JESUS. ”**

takes place when guilt isn't addressed — your family suffers. It hurts those who love you. We know of fellow warriors who “push back” loved ones emotionally, being foul mouthed or physically abusive to their spouse and kids. Men and women of valor are not supposed to act in this manner. You have the right to a more excellent avenue of approach. The redemption bought by the shedding of Jesus' blood on the cross brings about reconciliation from the overwhelming burden of guilt.

I know, it's difficult to know what to do with the pain and distress. A lot of emotional stuff wells up in us when confronting guilt.

How many have you felt like David, who wrote:

“For I am ready to fall, and my pain is ever before me. I confess my iniquity; I am sorry for my sin. ... Do not forsake me, O Lord! O my God, be not far from me! Make haste to help me, O Lord, my salvation!”  
(PSALM 38:17–18, 21–22)

We know guilt is so devastating to our lives and the lives of others. We tire of the devastation guilt has caused. We need help. The answer is rooted in the promises of our God pointing to His Son, Jesus. Let's look at forgiveness on Page 2.

# CHECK IT OUT!

**WORSHIP AND DEVOTIONS**  
[worshipanew.org](http://worshipanew.org)

**MILITARY ONE SOURCE**  
[militaryonesource.mil](http://militaryonesource.mil)

**VETERANS CRISIS LINE**  
[veteranscrisisline.net](http://veteranscrisisline.net)

**WARRIORS OF FAITH**  
[thelc.ms/lhm-warriors](http://thelc.ms/lhm-warriors)

**FORGIVENESS IS A CHOICE**  
[shoplhm.org/forgiveness-is-a-choice](http://shoplhm.org/forgiveness-is-a-choice)

**PTSD THE WAR AT HOME**  
[shoplhm.org/the-conflict-at-home-soldiers-confronting-ptsd](http://shoplhm.org/the-conflict-at-home-soldiers-confronting-ptsd)

**VICTIM, VALIDATED, VICTORIOUS**  
[shoplhm.org/victim-validated-victorious](http://shoplhm.org/victim-validated-victorious)

**STRENGTH AND HONOR**  
[shoplhm.org/strength-and-honor-the-spiritual-warfare-against-pornography](http://shoplhm.org/strength-and-honor-the-spiritual-warfare-against-pornography)

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