

The 7 Hardest Things You Will Ever Do

**Forgive Yourself
1 Timothy 1:12-17**

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Dr. Steve Horn

Introduction: We have been trying to work through some of the hardest things we will ever do. Today culminates the series that has examined taming the tongue, conquering worry, confessing sin without making excuses, being patient while praying, loving as Jesus loves, and forgiving others. For some today's lesson will be most difficult, because you think that your past sin has eliminated the possibility of God loving you. You are carrying around guilt as though your past is a permanent bag on your back. God wants nothing more than for you to drop that sack and embrace His grace.

Text: ¹² I give thanks to Christ Jesus our Lord, who has strengthened me, because He considered me faithful, appointing me to the ministry— ¹³ one who was formerly a blasphemer, a persecutor, and an arrogant man. Since it was out of ignorance that I had acted in unbelief, I received mercy, ¹⁴ and the grace of our Lord overflowed, along with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. ¹⁵ This saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance: "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners" —and I am the worst of them. ¹⁶ But I received mercy because of this, so that in me, the worst [of them], Christ Jesus might demonstrate the utmost patience as an example to those who would believe in Him for eternal life. ¹⁷ Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.

So, you think you have a past? The author of our text today (by way of his own testimony) had a checkered past. And yet, his testimony indicates that he had come to fully trust in God's grace to overcome his past.

Forgiving yourself is really all about Understanding God's Grace!

The truth is forgiving yourself is not necessarily even important from a spiritual perspective. What is important is living in the forgiveness of Christ. Forgiving yourself is the hang-up that keeps you from living in the grace of Christ.

We go back to that analogy of carrying around a sack. We used that analogy in reference to carrying around our worries. If you think carrying your worry requires a sack, carrying around our guilt requires a dump truck.

Facts About Our Past:

- (1) In Christ, our past represents what we were formerly. (1:13)
- (2) In Christ, our past reminds us of what we were in ignorance. (1:13)
- (3) In Christ, our past reflects the greatness of God's grace. (1:14-15)

Rather than your past being a reminder of how awful you are, let it be a reminder of how awesome God is.

Our Future in Light of Grace:

(1) Accept God's pardon.

- Conviction may be from God, but condemnation is from Satan.

Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. Romans 8:1

Richard Hoefler's book *Will Daylight Come?* Includes a homey illustration of how sin enslaves and forgiveness frees.

A little boy visiting his grandparents was given his first slingshot. He practiced in the woods, but he could never hit his target.

As he came back to Grandma's back yard, he spied her pet duck. On an impulse he took aim and let fly. The stone hit, and the duck fell dead.

The boy panicked. Desperately he hid the dead duck in the woodpile, only to look up and see his sister watching. Sally had seen it all, but she said nothing.

After lunch that day, Grandma said, "Sally, let's wash the dishes."

But Sally said, "Johnny told me he wanted to help in the kitchen today. Didn't you, Johnny?" And she whispered to him, "Remember the duck!" So Johnny did the dishes.

Later Grandpa asked if the children wanted to go fishing. Grandma said, "I'm sorry, but I need Sally to help make supper." Sally smiled and said, "That's all taken care of. Johnny wants to do it." Again she whispered, "Remember the duck." Johnny stayed while Sally went fishing.

After several days of Johnny doing both his chores and Sally's, finally he couldn't stand it. He confessed to Grandma that he'd killed the duck.

"I know, Johnny," she said, giving him a hug. "I was standing at the window and saw the whole thing. Because I love you, I forgave you. I wondered how long you would let Sally make a slave of you.

(2) Live a life of praise.

Focus on worship and take the focus off of yourself.

(3) Find God's purpose for your life.

Sometimes, past sin, Biblically restricts us from serving in specific capacities, but it does not keep us from finding and doing our God given purpose.