


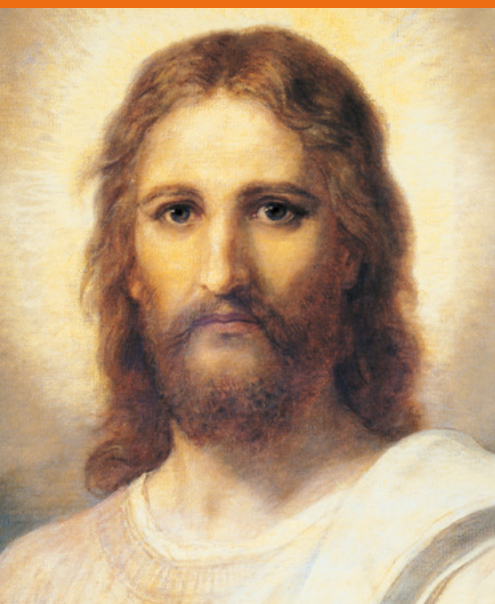
THE KEY TO FORGIVING MYSELF



It had been five months, and I still couldn't forgive myself. Ever since slipping up and doing something I was ashamed of, I felt like I was on a downward spiral. My shame kept building anytime I did something else I thought was wrong. I couldn't feel at peace.

By Madison Child

I didn't need to keep punishing myself because Jesus Christ had already atoned for my sins.



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I had prayed for forgiveness and had even felt that God had forgiven me. But I just couldn't forgive myself. How could I when I had sinned? I kept beating myself up over and over again, preventing myself from moving on.

While I was feeling this way, I went to a summer youth conference where we focused a lot of our studies on the Savior's Atonement. One day I came across a passage in the Book of Enos that said: "Enos, thy sins are forgiven thee, and thou shalt be blessed.

"And I, Enos, knew that God could not lie; wherefore, my guilt was swept away" (Enos 1:5–6).

That was powerful for me. I realized that, like me, Enos had done something wrong and needed forgiveness. He even described his struggle to seek forgiveness as a wrestle before God (see Enos 1:2). But eventually, after praying through the day and night, Enos felt peace. And when he asked, "Lord, how is it done?" the Lord replied, "Because of thy faith in Christ" (Enos 1:7, 8).

That was it! Enos had faith in Jesus Christ. If Enos could let the Savior erase his guilt, why couldn't I let Him bring that same peace into my life? From that point on, every time I felt that I couldn't forgive myself, I thought of Jesus Christ's love and forgiveness.

I prayed for the ability to let go of my bad feelings and to stop feeling so ashamed. It took some time, but after many prayers, I stopped feeling so terrible all the time. I finally felt peace.

This experience taught me a lot about Christ's grace. After I sinned, I felt godly sorrow, prayed, repented, and felt a confirmation that God had forgiven me. Yet I still kept punishing myself. I eventually realized that I didn't need to keep making myself suffer for committing that sin because Jesus Christ already paid for it through His Atonement. It must have been hard and painful for Him, but He was still willing to suffer so that I don't have to.

I've since learned to rely on Jesus Christ and let His peace fill my life by strengthening my relationship with Him and my Heavenly Father. I try to pray and read the scriptures, especially the Book of Mormon, every day. I try to participate in uplifting activities and good media.

I still make mistakes, but I know if I repent and keep doing my best, Jesus Christ will bless me with His grace. When I rely on Him and on Heavenly Father, guilt and shame does end. I now know the peace that comes from having faith in Jesus Christ, and I am stronger because of it. ■

The author lives in Utah, USA.