

WHO'S YOUR DADDY
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I speak from experience in saying guilt from failing God can destroy a perfectly good relationship with God. The shame we feel can make us miserable in the presence of God. We find it hard to pray, hard to worship, and especially hard to witness. We feel deep down we are hypocrites and who are we to give advice to others on how to live? So we quietly sit, letting peace and love and joy and strength pass us by, service after service and encounter after encounter with a God who desires our company. Our guilt drives our continued loneliness. A story recently sent me via e-mail illustrates this well.

Johnny visited his grandparents' farm. He was given a slingshot and practiced in the woods; but could never hit the target. A little discouraged, he headed back for dinner. En route, he saw Grandma's pet duck. With no hope of success, he let fly, hit the duck square in the head, and killed it. He was horrified! In a panic, he hid the duck in a wood pile; only to find his sister watching! Sally had seen it all, but said nothing. After lunch the next day Grandma asked Sally to wash dishes, but Sally replied that Johnny wanted to help in the kitchen. Then she whispered to him, "Remember the duck?" So Johnny did the dishes. Later, Grandpa wanted to take the children fishing, but Grandma said she needed Sally's help making dinner. Sally smiled and said Johnny wanted to help in the kitchen too. She whispered again, "Remember the duck?" So Sally went fishing and Johnny stayed to help. After doing both his chores and Sally's for a few days, he finally broke down, came to Grandma and confessed he had killed the duck. She knelt down, gave him a hug and said, "I know! I was standing at the window and I saw the whole thing, but I love you and forgave you. I was just wondering how long you would let Sally make a slave of you."

How close is this story to us as we cringe from the presence of a holy God? Whatever our past, whatever we did, we need to understand God saw it. He has seen our entire life, still loves us, and will forgive us. We just have to decide to stop letting Satan use guilt to enslave us. God is at the window.

Whose is this voice telling us truthfully we are too unholy to stand before God? Not God's! Jesus said in **John 8:10-11** to the woman caught in adultery. "Woman, where are your accusers? Has no man condemned you?" When she answered, "No man, Lord," Jesus said to her, "Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more." Jesus was not interested in shunning her for her mistakes, He just wanted her restored. Paul said in **Romans 8:1** there was no longer any condemnation to them that were in Christ Jesus, who walked not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. So who accuses us when we fail and feel shame?

The accuser of the brethren is discussed in **Revelation 12:10-11**. In this triumphal scene, he is cast down and is stopped from accusing us before God day and night. Notice that with his accusations, he comes between us and our God. The accused overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and the word of their testimony. The blood covered and removed their sins forever. Their testimony was most likely praise for mercy bestowed on them. Praise brings us back into contact with God. We will look at that shortly.

How do we apply the blood to overcome the accuser? We begin with repenting of our failure. We need only do that once since true repentance is turning away from that sin forever. The key word is "turn." In **2 Chronicles 30:9** we receive a promise, "For if ye turn again unto the LORD, your brethren and your children shall find compassion before them that lead them captive, so that they shall come again into this land: for the LORD your God is gracious and merciful, and will not turn away his face from you, if ye return unto him." God wants us home; probably more than we do, and promised our returning will result in forgiveness. It is written in **1John 1:8-9** that "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." Jesus said in **John 6:37** that all who came to Him, He will not refuse.

Too many of us can relate to the story of the prodigal son in **Luke 15:17-18**. As low as he could get, consumed by remorse, he finally "came to himself" and decided to turn back to his father and repent. He finally realized no matter how despicably he had behaved, he still had his father's name and was still his father's son. No matter how foolish we have been, if we ever took on the Father's name through baptism in Jesus name, we will still be our Father's son when we come to ourselves and repent.

Once we repent and turn around, how do we get back home? There is that praise thing again. **Psalms 100:4** tells us to "Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful

unto him, and bless his name.” He inhabits the praises of His people. Those are not offerings we bring into His presence, but praise and thanksgiving are keys we use to open the doors of His courts and His gates. It is worship that brings us into His presence and His presence into us as the Holy Ghost. Pay attention now. No matter how unworthy we feel, if we are tired of being separated from God, repentance and praise will bring us back in His presence. We have His Word on that.

Why does he let us come home? Listen to the Father in **Luke 15:23-24**. “Bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat, and be merry: For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.” In Luke 15:10, the angels also rejoice when we come to ourselves and come home.

We will rejoice as well, when we ignore the accuser, come to ourselves and back home to our Father. He is waiting and watching for us at the window.