

This section provides examples of how the burden of guilt is often lifted through confession, repentance and forgiveness. Volunteers are encouraged to read this piece aloud. Alternatively, play Week 5 of the corresponding CD on which you will hear this section as read by the author.

When I was a kid, we were very poor. Although I'm not proud of it, I used to take money out of my mother's purse. I always felt ashamed, and I told myself that I'd repay it when I was older and had a job. I always wanted to tell my mother how sorry I was as she must have missed that money. Because I was too ashamed and could never quite figure out how to bring it up for discussion, she died without me ever being able to say that I'm sorry. – Terry

CALL OUT

*When I kept silent,
my bones wasted away
through my groaning all day long.
For day and night
your hand was heavy upon me;
my strength was sapped
as in the heat of summer.*

Psalm 32:3-4

It was such a long time ago, now. We were having so much fun. You know how it is. I was out with the boys. Actually, I was out with my brother-in-law. As I tell my wife,

I was just trying to get along with her family. Anyway, as the night carried on, I jokingly told my brother-in-law that I really liked a particular picture that was hanging on the wall in the tavern, and that I would pay him twenty dollars if he would steal it for me. I was joking of course, but the conversation got carried away. The next thing I knew, he took the picture off the wall and took it out to my car. The following day, I felt very badly about what we did, so I took the picture back and apologized. The owner of the tavern was very grateful to have his picture back as he had won it as a prize from a special sales promotion. He was so grateful that he thanked me for returning the picture, told me not to worry about it, and invited me to sit down and have a drink with him. I'm glad I did the right thing in the end. I would have felt ashamed every time I went there if I had not returned the picture. I'm not sure I would have even gone back there again if I hadn't made amends. – Brad

CALL OUT

*Then I acknowledged my sin to you
and did not cover up my iniquity,
I said, "I will confess
my transgressions to the Lord" –
and you forgave
the guilt of my sin.*

Psalm 32:5

My parents were on a trip and my siblings were at my grandparents' house a half hour drive away. I was a sophomore in high school. My grandparents agreed to let me stay home alone because I had a concert at school the next day. They trusted me. I didn't

realize I would hurt my grandmother when I threw a party at my parents' house.

Although I was not accustomed to drinking, I invited everyone over for a drinking party. Some of the people that came over were my friends, but many of them were people that just used me for a place to party. Well, the party got way out of hand. It wasn't fun. The house was a mess, a glass table was cracked, and there were eggs on the ceiling!

My parents were so angry when they came home. They grounded me for three months. They also prevented me from seeing certain friends. They even called the school and told the teachers that I was not allowed to speak with these particular friends.

My relationship with my grandparents was hurt for a very long time. My beloved grandfather wouldn't look at me the next few times we were together for family gatherings, except to tell me that I had really hurt my grandmother. I broke her trust. She didn't think I would do that kind of thing. I made her look bad. Apparently, my dad didn't trust the situation before they left home, so he wanted me to stay at my grandparents' home along with my siblings. My grandmother insisted that I could be trusted. I proved that he was right and my grandmother was wrong.

I felt so ashamed.

Eventually, we talked about it more. I said that I was sorry many times. I didn't want them to think of me as a lying kid that couldn't be trusted. I wanted them to trust me again. I worked hard to gain their trust back. I wanted to show my parents and grandparents that I could be a responsible person. It took a long time, but I worked through the guilt and shame and became a better person. Ultimately, my mistake, punishment, and shame benefited me. I'm so thankful that my parents and grandparents cared enough to make sure I knew what I had done was wrong. I felt guilty for my

mistakes and I felt shameful for hurting my grandparents; but I worked through the situation to become a better person. – Joanne

CALL OUT

Repent, then, turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord.

Acts 3:19

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