



**I feel really guilty for believing in Jesus and taking his forgiveness and eternal life, but then not doing the other stuff he wants. What does God think about that?**

This is a great question. It came from a confirmation student. When it was asked, the rest of the students nodded agreement and said they'd had similar thoughts, so chances are real good you have had that same guilty feeling.

I would respond to that question first with this question: Who do you suppose gave you that "twinge of guilt?" God did.

Whenever you feel guilty about doing something you know God doesn't want you doing (or for not doing something you know He does want you to do), that's God trying to get your attention.

And what does God want you to do when he has your attention?

First of all, run - don't walk - to Jesus for the forgiveness he purchased on the cross. He has forgiveness for all your sins. Take it !

But after he has your attention and you have his forgiveness, then what?

Then do what Matthew (the disciple who at that time was a "tax collector") did in a similar situation:

As Jesus went on from there, he saw a man named Matthew sitting at the tax collector's booth. "Follow me," he told him, and Matthew got up and followed him. Matthew 9:9

Matthew had grown up in a Jewish household. He knew God. He knew God wouldn't be pleased with the cheating and lying that was typical of the tax collector profession in those days. He likely had a lot of guilt. And when Jesus came and said "Follow me," Matthew did. He got up and quit the profession that was bringing the guilt. Then he invited Jesus into his home for a meal. The closest of fellowship.

When you find God pecking you on the shoulder with a feeling of guilt, ask His forgiveness and then heed Jesus' call to simply walk away from what is causing you the guilt. Heed his call to follow him. And then invite him into your life - not to eat a meal, but to help you walk away from whatever is making you feel guilty.

We are coming up to the season of Lent. The time when it is traditional to "give something up." Ask God for his power to give up that thing that's giving you those guilt feelings, something that thing that's keeping you from following Jesus as you know he wants. It won't be easy, but it will be worth it. God has the power to help. It's what he wants you to do.

Thanks for asking,  
Pastor David

Send your questions to [pastor@livingwordlutheran.net](mailto:pastor@livingwordlutheran.net)