

# Surrender Your Guilt

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# CONTENTS



Flourish! How to Use This Resource	5
Days 1–8: Guilt-Burdened You	9
Days 9–15: Grace-Full God	29
Days 16–22: Dwell in Grace	46
Days 23–30: Extend Grace	68
Go Deeper	88
Notes	93

I dedicate this book to dear friends who embody, exude, and extend grace. With love and hope for many more years of grace-filled and Christ-centered friendship, I'm grateful to Katie Greiwe and Alison Tarka.

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How to Use This Resource

# FLOURISH!



Jesus wants us to have full, abundant, vibrant lives found only through intimate, flourishing faith relationships with him.

But what about when life is so full of demands and responsibilities that we feel too busy to breathe? Is it possible to stay connected with God—to have a flourishing faith—even during the busiest seasons of life? Yes!

Spiritual growth can happen in a variety of ways. And in busy seasons when we can't realistically maintain an hour-long-Bible-study-every-morning habit, we can still connect with God by tuning in to his presence and listening to his voice, moment-by-moment, throughout each day.

## Connected

Each day of this thirty-day journey includes three different faith-nourishing experiences in which you can connect with God and deepen your relationship with him. These experiences take just five to fifteen minutes. You can do one in the morning, one midday, and one in the evening. Or you can select just one per day.

Also, you can turn this resource into a ninety-day journey by doing just one experience each day.

## Encounter . . . Deepen . . . Grow

Encounter God in a variety of daily experiences:

- **Act:** Apply Scripture’s challenges to your life through concrete action.
- **Create:** Use art, drawing, poetry, or another hands-on project to interact with God.
- **Examine:** Explore Scripture using investigation, research, and study.
- **Interact:** Connect with another person as part of your spiritual journey.
- **Internalize:** Interact with Scripture using Christian contemplation, meditation, and memorization.
- **Journal:** Reflect on your journey and record your thoughts in creative ways.
- **Ponder:** Read and think about Scripture, historical information, or an insightful quotation.
- **Pray:** Speak to God and listen to him.
- **Symbolize:** Use an experience or common object as a metaphor to help you contemplate a spiritual truth.
- **Worship:** Express gratitude and praise to God.

## Surrender Your Guilt

From the moment Eve covered away in shame after eating the forbidden fruit to today, we all live with the devastating effects of sin. We’ve each taken a bite of the proverbial fruit—we each know the pain of shame, distance from God, self-condemnation, guilt. It’s a burden too heavy to carry, a wound too deep to bandage, and a problem way too big to be ignored.

Thankfully, we have a great, big God. A God who invites us to surrender our soul-crushing guilt and receive, in its place, his gift of grace. The gift that not only saves us through our faith in Christ, but shapes and empowers us to live in freedom and joy.

Over the next thirty days, you'll invite God to help you understand and experience his grace in a fresh, soul-deep way. You'll encounter the love of God displayed on the cross and poured out in new mercies for you every day. You'll invite God to use you as an ambassador of his grace to a graceless world. You'll discover. You'll grow. You'll be changed.

Ready your heart. Prepare to meet God. Begin the journey.



Invite others to join you on this journey by downloading a **free** leader's guide for group discussion at [www.flourishing-faith.com](http://www.flourishing-faith.com).



days 1-8

# GUILT-BURDENED YOU



day 1

# Begin



## Journal

Sin, brokenness, shame, and guilt are heavy, wearying burdens. They're soul-poisoners. They're hope-crushers. God invites you to surrender them. To be set free through his healing truth and begin a journey into grace.

Grab your journal and write some thoughts reflecting on your spiritual and emotional state right now, at the start of this exploration of grace. Why did you pick up this book? What do you most hope God will do in your life through this journey? What struggles, pain, heartache, or guilt-burdens are you dealing with? How do you desire to encounter and experience God's grace? Where are you now, here at the start, and where do you hope to be by this journey's end?

## Interact

Surrendering guilt is profoundly freeing, but it is not easy. Dealing honestly with ongoing sin and brokenness is powerfully healing, but it can also leave you feeling isolated, afraid, and alone. Exploring God's grace is tremendously empowering, but your pride can hold you back.

Don't try to do it alone! You need support through this journey. Recruit a close Christian friend (or a few) who can commit to pray for you regularly as you journey through this book. Ask your friend to pray that God will grow and stretch

you in ways you may not expect. Invite her to pray that you'll experience the depth of God's love for you in life-changing ways.

## Create

Grab your camera so you can create and then capture an image of grace graffiti. Somewhere, in the middle of your normal, everyday context, write the word *grace*—then take a picture. Consider these ideas:

- Draw *grace* brightly on your sidewalk with colorful chalk.
- Use a stick to scrawl *grace* into garden dirt or your kids' sandbox (or even in snow or on the beach!).
- Write it on a note and post it in your cubicle or on your computer.
- Use a black marker to "tattoo" it on your ankle in cool handwriting.
- Create the word *grace* using natural objects like twigs, leaves, and dried grasses.

Save the picture you take and print it out, then tuck it away in your journal for use later during this devotional journey.

day 2

# START in THE DARK



## Ponder

Guilt. We all have it. In fact, we all deserve it. “For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Rom. 3:23). Even as believers in Christ, we still continue to “stumble in many ways” (James 3:2).

And so this journey must start in the dark place: the painful weight of sin and guilt. For some, guilt is a poignant and present reality. An event from the past or a current struggle with sin dogs our conscience. We feel like the psalmist: “I am about to fall and my pain is ever with me. . . . I am troubled by my sin” (Ps. 38:17–18).

For others, guilt is a distant concept. We know we’re sinners (of course!), we believe Jesus paid the price for our sin, and we stand confident in God’s grace. But somewhere hidden in that confidence is a sense of taking God’s grace for granted. And we need a wake-up call! Pride and perfectionism are masking our deep need to step away from self-reliance and lean completely on God’s grace.

Where are you on this guilt spectrum? What’s your gut reaction to the word *guilt*? And what might that reaction reveal about you? About your spiritual life? About how God might be speaking to you right now?

## Create

Guilt likes to take up residence in our lives. Guilt gets comfy, moves in the furniture, and then calls its buddies over to move in too. Soon there's a whole apartment building populated with guilt's gang of comrades: shame, regret, condemnation, and distorted self-image. And don't forget those three who you probably didn't even realize were close pals of guilt: pride, perfectionism, and critical spirit.

Guilt and its gang try to move in, chase us down, cling to us, bite at our ankles, and refuse to shake free. And if we let them, guilt and its gang wreak havoc on our emotions, our physical health, and especially our spiritual vitality.

In your journal, take a few minutes to sketch a depiction of guilt and its buddies. Draw figures as you imagine each one to be, creatively expressing the way they make you feel.

## Pray

Which of the words below most resonate with where you are right now in your relationship with God? Circle several words and use them to structure a time of prayer. Focus on each concept, speaking briefly and honestly with God about it.



day 3

# Face Yourself



## Examine

Read 2 Samuel 11:1—12:6. As you do, take notes describing David's actions.

- What choices and behaviors do you observe here that are a common pattern for people dealing with sin and guilt?
- What motivations do you think lay behind David's choices? His attempted cover up?
- Does David's response to Nathan's story surprise you? Why do you think David was so outraged?

Now read 2 Samuel 12:7–13. As you do, add to your notes.

- How do you imagine David felt when Nathan said, "You are the man!" (12:7)?
- Why do you think it took David so long to finally admit "I have sinned" (12:13)? What often holds us back from seeing the truth?

Sin doesn't have to be as dramatic as adultery and arranging a murder. At times we all fall prey to the same patterns of guilt as David. Can you see yourself in David's story: giving into temptation, scheming to cover up secret sin, exhibiting self-righteous anger, but blind to (or still fiercely trying to hide) his own guilt? Can you see yourself in David's admission: the

powerful moment of really facing himself and looking squarely at all he had done?

## Act

Go to a mirror and look at yourself. Just as Nathan said, “You are the man!” to David (2 Sam. 12:7), can you speak the truth to yourself? With honesty and courage, face yourself. Name hidden sins, shameful habits, or secret struggles. Speak aloud shortcomings, self-centered patterns and attitudes, or sins of omission. Strip them of the power they find in secrecy and darkness; bring them into the light.

This isn’t about making yourself feel bad or drumming up a long list or stirring up guilty emotions. This is simply about a frank, honest conversation with God and with yourself about your need for him, for his healing, and for his grace. What might God want you to truly see and acknowledge in order for you to move forward on this spiritual journey?

## Internalize

Reflect on Psalm 32:3–5. Have you ever felt this way? Like you were wasting away inside? Like a heavy hand was upon your heart? Or have you ever let sin and guilt remain unacknowledged for so long that it became your “normal” and it didn’t hurt like it should?

Keeping silent about sin—to ourselves and to God—saps us of spiritual vitality. But facing ourselves—the reality of our sin and selfish tendencies—is a first courageous step into healing, into the easy, generous, embrace of God’s ready forgiveness.

Now look at the fuller context: Psalm 32:1–7. Read it aloud, with feeling, as a declaration both to God and to yourself of its truth.